

IN THIS CORNER:

THE NEWSPAPER ARCHIVE



GORILLA MONSOON

GORILLA JOINS US

"Professional wrestling is a sport that deals in sadistic tendencies, because, let's face it, people are all basically sadistic, it's been proven."

So writes the newest member of the Journal's staff, professional wrestler Gorilla Monsoon; is his first column tomorrow.

There's a lot of controversy surrounding pro wrestling, and Gorilla plows head-first into it, starting off with whether his sport is real, or if it is "fixed."

If you're a professional wrestling fan, you won't want to miss Gorilla's column, "In This Corner," which will appear every Wednesday. And if you're not a pro wrestling fan, the 401-pound Gorilla would like to have a word with you.



The Golden Terror tries to separate the body of the Journal's newest columnist, Gorilla Monsoon, from his head in a match at the Spectrum.



PHILADELPHIA JOURNAL/Wednesday, July 25, 1979

In This Corner

Gorilla Monsoon

Pro wrestling is not phony

I can only speak very highly of professional wrestling, as a sport. I know that's contrary to the many stigmas that have gone on over the years about pro wrestling, having predetermined winners — many, many things of that nature. That's all news to me. I've been doing this for 17 years now and never once have I ever been asked by a wrestling promoter to lay down in the ring or take it easy on a guy.

I really blame the wrestling promoters themselves for not educating the public more about what pro wrestling is all about. It's a sport where two men sign a contract to engage in a wrestling match, of which there is a set purse for that match depending on what the gross money is at the box office that night. And the winner's share of that purse is 70 percent, and the loser's share is 30 percent.

Guys will do strange things for money — that's what professional sports are all about. The time for the fame and the glory and the trophies is all behind you. It's time to get out there and make a living — and that's what this business is really all about.

I've been involved with wrestling since I was eight years old. I started in the YMCA back home in Rochester, N.Y. Wrestling was something I loved, so I decided to stay with it. I wrestled all through high school and college. I made a European and Asiatic tour in 1959 with the Olympic team that went to Russia, Turkey, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, and many, many Iron Curtain countries.

Then I went into teaching school. One day I was approached by Frank Tunney, a wrestling promoter from Maple Leaf Gardens in Toronto. He said he'd been reading a lot of publicity about me and wanted to know if I'd be interested in working for them.

\$500 a week

My first question was, "What kind of money are we talking about?" He said, "Well, we'll start you at \$500 a week." I told him I'd be there in the morning. That was no big decision to make.

That was back in 1961 and I've been wrestling professionally ever since. It certainly has been a good life for me.

Although I was never injured in scholastic or amateur sports, I've had countless injuries during my professional career. Since I've been a pro I've been knifed, black-jacked, bottle-whipped, had both shoulders broken, had all my ribs broken more than twice, had serious kidney injuries, dislocated ankles, countless numbers of contusions and concussions, too numerous to mention and if this is all part of an act, I wish somebody would have told me about it a long time ago — maybe I could have eliminated a lot of those injuries.

Wrestling is a sport that deals in sadistic tendencies. Let's face it — people are all basically sadistic — it's been proven time and time again.

You go down to the Spectrum one night to watch a hockey game and there's more reaction from the crowd when they drop their gloves and fight than when they score a goal.

If we could advertise in our paper that some night this week down at the Spectrum some Mickey Mouse circus was going to come in and the man on the highwire was going to fall and probably get killed you wouldn't be able to buy a ticket. It would be a complete sellout.

Knowing that people want to see body contact, those are the sports that make money today; knowing that they want to see the big bodies flying through the air, that's what we deliver. And the people really LOVE it — they eat it up, and rightly so because it's GREAT entertainment.

Wrestling has been doing well in the Philadelphia area since 1963. I don't think professional wrestling will ever die. We're constantly catering to new generations.

If you want to watch us this summer, we're in Wildwood every Monday night at the Convention Hall and at the Steel Pier in Atlantic City every Thursday. Our next card at the Spectrum is Saturday, August 18.

I'll be writing this column every Wednesday and I'd like to answer any questions you have about professional wrestling. Write to me here at the Journal, 3010 Market St., Phila., 19104.

In This Corner

Gorilla Monsoon

Once again this week I want to tip my hat to Spectrum promoter Phil Zacko for spending the kind of money necessary to bring the card he's got appearing at the Spectrum Saturday — and I know the kind of money involved here.

We have three matches here that any one of them would be a major event in any arena in the country: John Valiant versus Bob Backlund for the world title; Jimmy Valiant taking on the Eighth Wonder of the World, Andre the Giant; and the Indian Strap Match between Greg Valentine and Chief Jay Strongbow.

And, to all our Harrisburg area readers, professional wrestling will be returning to Harrisburg Friday, Aug. 24, with an outstanding card featuring the 7-foot-5-inch 485-pound Andre the Giant. He's a big boy and he's still growing.

Stretcher match

Mr. Monsoon:

Quite a few years ago I remember you fighting Bruno Samartino in a stretcher match. I was a regular fan then and still am but that match sticks in my mind any time I think about wrestling. I've been to many matches of all sorts such as the Texas Death and Steel Cage but never have I seen a more chilling and thrilling match in all my years as a fan than the one you and Mr. Samartino fought that particular night.

My question is what made you change from the so-called baddy to a goody back then and did that stretcher match have any influence on your decision?

P.S. I was amazed when you jumped into the ring to help

out Mr. Samartino as opposed to being against him. That was the start of your changing.

A. DeMasi
Maple Shade, N.J.

That Sicilian Stretcher Match will be with me forever. I have the permanent scars from that one both inside and out. I broke three ribs, fractured my left ankle, broke my nose and suffered countless number of cuts, contusions and abrasions. Many of those injuries still bother me today. Bruno fared a little better in the match. He only broke an ankle, dislocated an elbow and crushed one of his thoracic vertebrae.

Other than that Sicilian Stretcher Matches are a lot of fun.

When I started in this business I took as a manager Wild Red Berry who, in my opinion, knew everything there was to know about professional wrestling, being light-heavyweight champion of the world for 15 years and I gave him 25 percent of my income and did exactly what he told me to do. Needless to say he made me a great deal of money.

Several years ago Red passed away and I started doing my own booking and my own matchmaking and I got a little tired of all the scars I've received over the years, the cars that have been demolished in parking lots by the fans, being knifed, bottle whipped and blackjacked by irate fans, and I decided it was time to turn a new leaf while there was still one to turn.

I always had a great deal of respect for Bruno Samartino both in and out of the ring and in one instance where there was a great injustice being done to him I interceded and we have been great friends ever since.

Now let's dip into the mailbag.

Not phony

Dear Mr. Monsoon:

I liked reading your article on wrestling, but trying to tell people that wrestling is not phony is something I have to disagree with you about. I have gone to a lot of wrestling



North American heavyweight wrestling champion Pat Patterson shouts in vain as Ted Dibiase tosses him to the mats during recent title match which Gorilla Monsoon alleges Patterson stole.

matches and have seen it on TV and it is phony when I see a wrestler step on another and get up without getting hurt.

Wrestling also admits it is not a sport but an exhibition. I would like to know what you think about it.

Arnold Oxman
Brooklyn, N.Y.

If you've watched a lot of wrestling on TV you've only been looking at one dimension. If you would like to pick up my doctor's bills for a month that

would change your attitude.

Wrestlers accustom their bodies to taking punishment and are possibly the best conditioned athletes in the world.

I don't know that we admit wrestling's an exhibition. They're called professional wrestling bouts and or matches. Literally, the term exhibition, every time you pay to see something it's an exhibition. It's professional athletes exhibiting their athletic ability, whether it's baseball or football or hockey or wrestling.

Here's Gorilla Monsoon's column for the Philadelphia, Pennsylvania Journal of August 15, 1979, edited just a little in order to fit here.



Gorilla Monsoon

In This Corner



Because there are so many loyal wrestling fans out there I have made arrangements to have everyone whose letter appears in my column receive two complimentary tickets to the next Spectrum wrestling card, compliments of Gorilla Monsoon. All letters, therefore, must be signed with names and addresses printed legibly so I can send out their tickets.

On the wrestling scene, something special is going to take place in the wrestling world next Tuesday at the Great Allentown Fair. A super-spectacular night of wrestling will be held featuring a 20-man over the top battle royale with \$10,000 to the winner. Some of the men in the match include all three Valiants, the Great Hossien, Nicolai Volkoff, Pat Patterson, Tito Santan, Chief Jay Strongbow, Ivan Putski, Andre the Giant and yours truly.

In addition to this 20-man over the top battle royale, a world title is at stake. Bob Backlund will defend his title against No. 1 challenger Greg Valentine.

Now let's get into the mailbag:

Dear Gorilla:

Why is Pat Patterson in the American Wrestling Association and the World Wide Federation? Who won the last Battle Royale? Why do the referees allow the managers like Fred Blassie and Lou Albano to get in cheap hits and kicks?

Michael M. Lipford
Elwood, N.J.

In answer to your first question, all wrestlers are self-employed independent contractors. They can wrestle for whomever they choose whenever they choose as long as they fulfill all existing contracts.

The second answer is Andre the Giant, who won the battle royale in Olympic Auditorium, Los Angeles.

Third, referees are strictly under the jurisdiction of the state athletic commissions and I would suggest you write a letter to the state Athletic Commission asking that particular question and why something isn't done about it.

True competition

Dear Gorilla Monsoon:

I have been watching wrestling all my life. I am now 69-years-old. The matches I saw, they were real pros, using good holds, strategy and the wrestlers really put on a good show for the people.

There were no outside interference, no bad holds, and when one of them was out on the ropes, the referee did not allow man the other to touch him. If he did, he was given a three count, and after that he was disqualified.

The wrestlers were true and experienced and the competition was true and real, not fakey like ours of channel 17 and 29.

You people are getting large audiences paying large prices, for what?

Tom Pacca
Audubon, N.J.

The wrestlers of yesteryear you spoke of would lay in a hammerlock or wristlock or toe hold for as long as 15 minutes. Wrestling fans today would not stand for that. We deal in excitement, in action, in huge bodies flying in the air. That's what sells tickets.

Dear Gorilla:

You say that pro wrestling is not an act. I watch wrestling every Saturday at 1, 5 and at midnight on

In This Corner

Gorilla Monsoon



Backlund - a dedicated champ

This week's profile subject is Bob Backlund.

Bob, the current World Wrestling Federation heavyweight champion, was born in Princeton, Minn., Aug. 14, 1949. Bob has a brother and a sister and spent his high school days at Princeton High where he had outstanding records in football, track and wrestling. After graduation Bob attended Waldorf Junior College in Forest City, Iowa and again at Waldorf he excelled at wrestling and football.

To complete his education Bob then went on to North Dakota State University where he became an All-American football player and in his junior year won the NCAA wrestling championship in the 130-pound weight division.

While at North Dakota U. Bob met and fell in love with his wife whom he affectionately refers to as Corkie. They currently reside in a beautiful New England home with their two-year-old daughter, Carrie.

Bob was introduced to professional wrestling in 1974 by Danny Hodge, a name well known to all wrestling fans. He also received further coaching from Vern Gagne. Bob entered the World Wrestling Federation in 1977 and after compiling a very impressive string of victories was given a crack at the title in Madison Square Garden, Feb. 20, 1978. The champion at that time was Superstar Billy Graham who did not think much of Backlund or his ability as a pro wrestler. However, when the smoke cleared a new champion was crowned and is still reigning.

Always training

Bob spends most of his free time training and a great deal of it with his family.

He trains harder than any professional athlete that I know with the possible exception of Bruno Sammartino.

Bob's extracurricular activities include sailing, racquetball, tennis and volleyball.

Backlund currently has a very demanding schedule, being World Wrestling Federation heavyweight champion. Not only does he defend his title in the U.S. but also in Japan, South America, Australia and Europe. Bob has several title defenses scheduled before the Oct. 20 Spectrum wrestling card, so he will either be defending or trying to regain his belt in the Spectrum, Saturday, Oct. 20.

Now we go in the mailbag.

Gorilla as champion?

Dear Gorilla:

Have you ever won any titles? And why doesn't the WWF have any state or regional championships (New York State Champion or Delaware Valley Champion) like the National Wrestling Alliance in the South?

Finally, last week you stated that only the ranked No. 1 challenger gets a title shot. Well, how did Crash Blackwell get a match against champion Bob Backlund last November when he was ranked No. 8 and how did John Valiant get a match against Backlund last month and he's not even in the top 10? And I also hear that Bruno Sammartino is getting a title match against Backlund and he isn't in the top 10. Please explain.

Mike Mathis
Philadelphia



BOB BACKLUND ... former football star

Answer:

I've held numerous titles over the years. I was several times co-holder of the World Tag Team Championship. I one time held the title with Professor Tanaka and another time I held it with Killer Kowalski. Another time I had it with El Mongol. I've been the All-Asiatic champion for the past 18 years and held the North American championship. And that's about it.

The reason they don't have as many regional titles in this area of the country is that there are so many other more valuable titles that are at stake here such as the world's title, the World Tag Team belt, and the most current Intercontinental Heavyweight Championship. I think that if there were any more belts involved than that it would become a farce.

Bruno Sammartino is not scheduled to wrestle Bob Backlund now or in the future. If any individual is not on the scene with enough wins to be deemed No. 1 challenger then the World Wrestling Federation has the discretion of giving anyone a shot at the champion. The champion must defend his title within 30 days.

Make a search

Dear Gorilla:

Why don't they have two referees in the ring when they have a tag team match? When a referee knows certain wrestlers bring foreign things in the ring, why

doesn't the referee search them better than they do?

Mary J. Werkman
Norristown

Answer:

The number of referees involved in any match is covered by the state athletic commission, and their current rules allow only one referee per tag match. To the best of my knowledge referees do search men who have been notorious for bringing things into the ring more thoroughly than others. However, it doesn't a magician to hide a foreign object on the body. Heavier suspensions and fines would certainly eliminate a lot of the foreign objects being carried into the ring.

Name change

Dear Gorilla Monsoon:

I'm 16 years old and I've been watching wrestling for over 10 years. My question is why did the W.W.F. change its name to the W.W.P.?

When I watch wrestling on channels 29 and 17 some of the wrestlers' shoulders were on the mat but they still lost the match. Could you explain that?

Does the sleeper hold really work?

Steve Levine
Levittawa

Answer:

The WWF changed its name when the current president Mr. Shima, from Japan, took over from the deceased Willie Gilsonberg. Why the extra W was dropped is beyond my comprehension, other than it sure made a big mouthful. World Wrestling Federation certainly is a lot easier to spit out.

You're only looking at one dimension on TV and you have a really poor perspective of what is actually taking place. You should try coming down to the Spectrum and seeing it live. The actual shoulders don't have to be on the mat, only the shoulder blades.

The sleeper hold definitely works. It's based on a very basic principle. By applying pressure on an artery you are stopping the flow of blood to the brain. As soon as the brain goes any length of time without oxygen which is carried by the blood, you become unconscious. It certainly does work, however I do not advise anyone trying it at home.

Graham back on mat

Dear Gorilla:

How is Superstar Billy Graham doing? I really would like to know if he is still around and if he will wrestle at the Spectrum any more.

Ray Novitski
Bridgeport, Pa.

Answer:

Superstar Billy Graham, since his surgery, has been doing very well. He is once again on a strenuous training schedule, currently taking boots in the local vicinity of his home in Arizona. He is scheduled for a world tour including Japan, Australia and New Zealand and should be back in the WWF area within the next year.

In This Corner

Gorilla Monsoon

From the looks of things right now, the next all-star professional wrestling card at the Spectrum in Philadelphia Oct. 20 is going to be one of the best of the year.

Phil Zacko is currently making contract matches, and he has already booked two outstanding ones.

One will feature Jerry Valiant against Yours Truly and the second is a special attraction with Swede Hanson vs. the Polish Power, Ivan Putski.

Mr. Zacko is also negotiating with Bruno Sammartino in the hope he will also be able to appear in a match that night.

As a new feature beginning next week, I will be writing about some of the superstars of professional wrestling so you can learn more about some of the sports' biggest names.

Now let's get into the mailbag:

Friendly Tito Santana

Dear Gorilla:

I am one of many female wrestling fans and I think it's fantastic that the Journal has come up with your column.

I would appreciate anything and everything you can tell me about Tito Santana. He is a great wrestler and looks like quite a man. He was the only wrestler who took time to shake hands with the spectators after his match in June.

Also, is there somewhere I can write him?

— Rene Capua, Merchantville, N.J.

Tito Santana is one of the most up and coming professional wrestling stars to appear on the wrestling scene in the past decade. He is from Mexico City. Recently, he received an award from the Pan-American Sports Federation, 1979's Wrestler of the Year Award. Tito, since entering the World Wrestling Federation, is undefeated and I know the pro-

moters are looking for great things from him. He can be contacted at Wrestling Associates, P.O. Box 877, Willingboro, N.J. 08046.

Nasty fans

Dear Gorilla:

Do you think it's right when fans who like the bad-guys get harassed and put down at wrestling matches?

When I'm at a match, I cheer for them and I'm not afraid to. But usually it results in a fight. I don't bother the fans, so why should they bother me? I mind my own business. Don't you think they should do the same?

—Janelle Scherbik, Trenton, N.J.

The sport of wrestling consists of many different personalities, the same as any other sport. Each professional wrestler has his own following. Everyone's entitled to cheer and root for their own sports heroes, regardless of who he is or who others are cheering for. That's what makes the world go 'round.

Rookie wrestled before

Dear Gorilla:

I enjoy your column tremendously. Continue the fine work.

I have a question about pro wrestling: How can Steve Travis be Rookie of the Year when Travis has been wrestling since 1977, when he wrestled professionally as Stonewall Jackson in the Halifax (Nova Scotia) area.

— J. Mannion, Prospect Park.

The title Rookie of the Year is given each year by the World Wrestling Federation. This was Steve's first year as a member of the World Wrestling Federation (WWF). The WWF does not consider it if a wrestler competed previously in any other country. Wrestling here is far superior, because this is the mecca for pro

wrestling. Any wrestler who makes it here, it is a feather in his cap. We have a Rookie of the Year every year.

Challengers bad guys

Dear Mr. Monsoon:

I'm glad to finally see more interest being taken on professional wrestling. The Journal seems to be the only paper around that has taken an interest.

Why is it that you never see a "good guy" wrestle for the championship. For example, Bob Backlund is champ. You never see a Chief Jay Strongbow, Ted Dibiase, Ivan Putski or any of the other good guys wrestling for the title!

It's always someone like Greg Valentine, John Valiant, Superstar Billy Graham or the likes of these men. Not taking anything away from Bob Backlund, but if he should ever wrestle someone like Andre the Giant, I mean come on, just size alone would probably beat him. Andre, supposedly, has never lost.

Let's be honest. Why doesn't this ever happen? They always talk about the number one contender (which is always a bad guy). Aren't the good guys ever rated high enough to get a title chance?

— Bruce Duke, Palmyra, N.J.

Number one, in order to be the No. 1 challenger, certain World Wrestling Federation requirements have to be met. For one, you have to travel extensively in the U.S. and other countries and meet their number one man. The wrestlers you mention don't make those kind of trips. Most of them are family men, who would rather stay in one area to be near home. I would love to see Bruno Sammartino versus Pedro Morales or Bo Bo Brazil. The matches do take place in other places, and it's unfortunate we don't see many of them.

Missing Jose Gonzalez

Dear Mr. Monsoon:

The dazzling, young wrestler named Jose Gonzalez is missed in his two-year absence by his many dedicated fans.

Would you kindly summarize Jose's tour and also include when he will return to the Philadelphia area?

— Diana Lerro, Philadelphia.

Upon his arrival in the Philadelphia area, Jose made a tour of the entire U.S., finishing up in Hawaii. From there he wrestled in Japan, Australia, South America and Germany, and after returning went to his native land of Puerto Rico. He is doing extremely well and is still there. I'm sure he'll be returning to Philadelphia within the next 12 months.

In This Corner

Gorilla Monsoon



Bruno Sammartino making Spectrum appearance Oct. 20

Wednesday, Sept. 26, 1979 / PHILADELPHIA JOURNAL

Promoter Phil Zacko of the Spectrum has just released a complete wrestling card for Saturday, Oct. 20, with nine great bouts and a double main event.

In the first feature, Nicoli Volkoff will wrestle Bruno Sammartino, and Bob Bachlund will defend his title against newly-crowned Intercontinental heavyweight champion Pat Patterson in the second. In other bouts, I will wrestle Jerry Valliant, Swede Hanson will take on Ivan Putski, John Valliant will do battle with Domenic DeNucci, Mr. X will face Tito Santana, and making his return after a lengthy layoff, Larry Zybisco will face Baron Sichuna. Including two preliminary bouts, there will be 18 wrestlers in all.

This week's personality profile is on Greg Valentine. Born Sept. 20, 1949, Greg spent his childhood days in Seattle, Wash., where he attended Mark Morris High and excelled in football, wrestling and baseball. Upon graduation, he sought further education at Lower Columbia Junior College, where he participated in the same three sports, doing extremely well in wrestling. Greg now makes his home in San Antonio, Texas, with his wife and two daughters.

Young Valentine grew up emulating his father, the one-time great superstar of the mat, Johnny Valentine. Greg started his professional career in Calgary, Alberta, Canada in 1970 and did not really come into his own until a tragic airplane crash crippled his father for life. The accident had a great effect on Greg's life and is probably the underlying reason for Greg's great success today.

Greg has many accomplishments to his credit in pro wrestling and has held the following titles: WWF tag-team champion, Mid-Atlantic champion, and the Americas title. Although a feared and hated man because of the figure-four leg lock he has mastered, Greg has a bright future in the king of sports — Professional Wrestling.

Greg is a music collector and has a complete library of country and western and rock music. He is an outdoor buff and enjoys boating, water skiing and camping. He currently operates a natural food restaurant in San Antonio with his dad. Greg's life ambition is to win the world title, and, after wrestling, raise Siberian huskies.

Let's wrestle into the mailbag.

Matches aren't fixed

Dear Gorilla Monsoon:

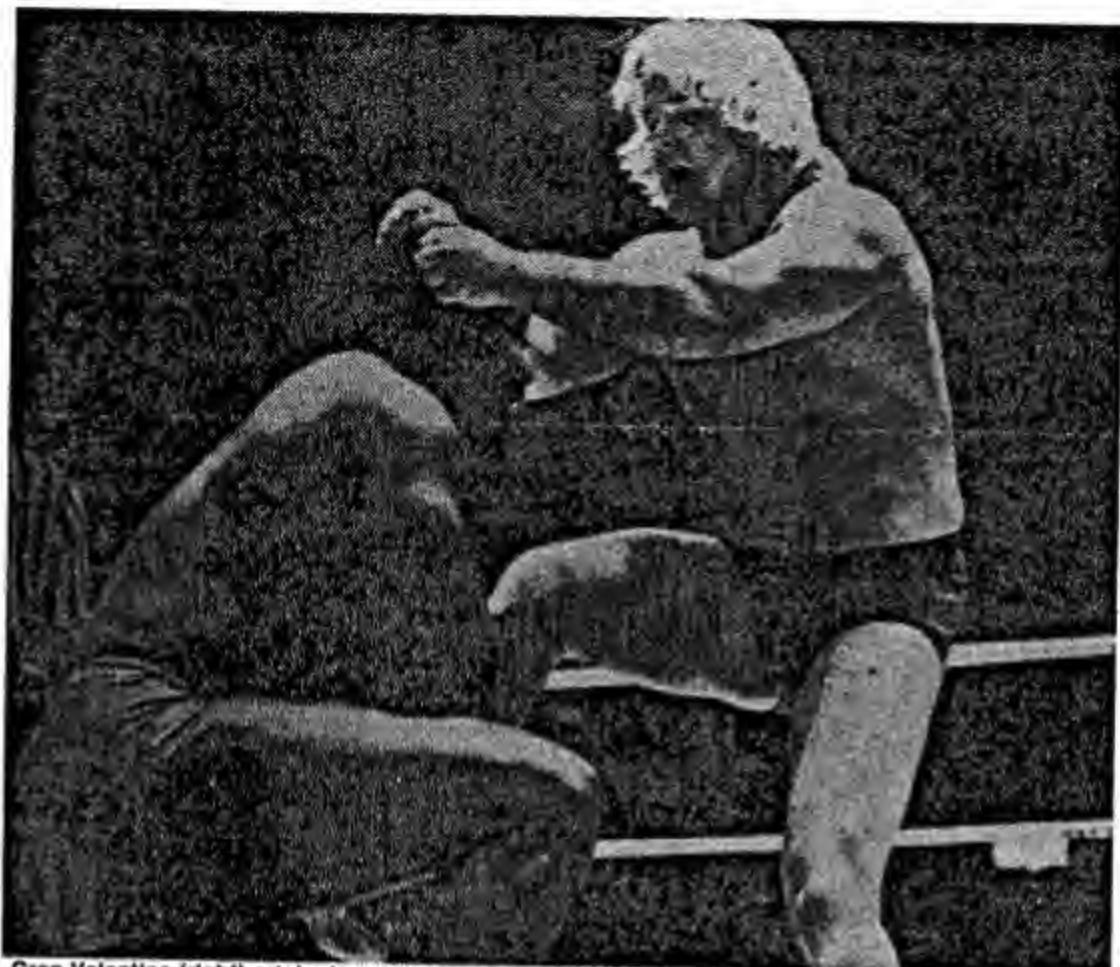
Is Eduard Carpenter still wrestling, and, if so, will he be here in Philadelphia? Also, I know that some of those matches are fixed because when I was at the TV studio where they were taping them, I sat in the front row, where you could hear the wrestlers telling each other what to do. Please answer truthfully.

Wrestling Fan, Sue McDonnell, Philadelphia

Eduard Carpenter is still very active in pro wrestling, spending most of his time in Canada, particularly Montreal. I had the pleasure of seeing him about a month ago in Toronto, and he is in fantastic condition. He would love to come back to the World Wrestling Federation and will probably do so in the near future.

Wrestlers often talk in the ring, primarily to the referees. Often times they are cursing each other or trying to make an opponent lose his cool by verbally attacking him. This is the only type of conversation that goes on in the ring.

This page & preceding - column from Philadelphia, Pennsylvania paper.



Greg Valentine, (right) originator of the controversial figure four leg lock, is this week's personality profile.

that I am familiar with.

Out of the ring

Dear Gorilla:

Why can't wrestling be confined to the ring? If two wrestlers go outside the ring and fight, bang heads and break furniture, couldn't this be dangerous to the fans? Is this outside-the-ring fighting a show for the fans and is it necessary? Also, how can I write to Bob Bachlund and the other wrestlers?

Nancy Gatter, Philadelphia
It is very difficult to prevent pro wrestlers from spilling out of the ring. It is a natural advantage to be able to throw your opponent from the square circle, onto the concrete floor, injure him and not be able to continue, making you the winner. Ringside seating in all arenas is set up so that the paying customers are far away from the action as not to get involved. However, if you are a ringsider and you leave your seat, you could very easily become entangled and wind up in the hospital.

All wrestlers currently wrestling in the World Federation can be contacted by writing to them at Wrestling Associates, P.O. Box 877, Willingboro, N.J., 08046.

Patera still wrestling

Dear Gorilla:

I would like to know if Ken Patera is still wrestling. If so, where, and will he be returning to the Spectrum?

Chris Sucloski, Bridgeport, Pa.

Dear Chris

Ken Patera, a superstar in our profession, is always busy. He's currently wrestling in the North Carolina area but he will return to the World Federation area within the next four months. Because of his outstanding reputation and Olympic records, he will be an asset to any area in which he chooses to work.

TV coverage

Mr. Monsoon:

I would like to thank the Journal for bringing professional wrestling coverage to the Philadelphia area. My question to you is, "What is your opinion of professional wrestling being ignored by the major networks, such as ABC's Wide World of Sport, CBS' Sports Spectacular, and NBC's Sports World?"

Mr. Joseph Donahue, Philadelphia

I think the major media are ignoring us a lot less today than they did 20 years ago, primarily due to the large capacity crowds professional wrestling is enjoying and the numerous' requests from such great sports fans as yourself. I'm sure that in the near future, such programs will cover professional wrestling.

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

In This Corner

Gorilla Monsoon



Ring safety in U.S. should be standardized

It's getting closer to the big night - October 20, when promoter Phil Zacko will put on a fantastic double event at the Spectrum. In the first main event, Nicol Volkoff will face Bruno Sammartino. Main event No. 2 will be for the world title, with Intercontinental champion Pat Patterson taking on World Wrestling Federation champ Bob Backlund. Seven other outstanding bouts will round out the card, with all your favorite TV stars such as Ivan Putski, Swede Hanson, the Valiant Brothers, Domenic DiNucci, Tito Santana and others.

* * *

This week's personality profile is on Ted DiBiase. Born Jan. 18, 1954, in Miami, Ted was the third of three sons who grew up in a wrestling environment. Ted's dad, Mike DiBiase was an outstanding amateur wrestler, who once won the national AAU championship and was an eight-letter man at Nebraska U. The elder DiBiase also spent 20 years as a headliner in professional wrestling.

Ted attended Wilson High in Phoenix, where he was all-state football star. After graduation, he attended West Texas State where he had three outstanding seasons on the football team.

In 1975, under the tutelage of Terry and Dory Funk, Ted broke into the ranks of professional wrestling and it wasn't long before his name became a household word in the Midwestern states. In Ted's short career to date, he has already held the following titles: The Western States Tag Team Title, International Heavyweight Champion and North American Heavyweight Champion. Ted is currently making his home in Parsippany, N.J., where in his spare time he enjoys swimming and other outdoor sports with wife, Jayne, and his 2-year-old son, Michael.

Ted's greatest goal is to regain the North American title, which he claims was stolen from him by Pat Patterson.

"I would like to remain in professional wrestling forever," Ted told me. He indicated that he'd be interested in entering the promotion or business end of wrestling when he is no longer able to climb into the square circle.

Ted DiBiase certainly has one of the most friendly faces of anyone I know.



Ivan Putski talks to bloodied champ Bob Backlund after recent Specter bout. Both wrestlers, plus other top stars, will return to Philadelphia on October 20.

in world of professional wrestling. He has youth, strength, speed, stamina and most of all, wrestling ability.

Let's get to the mail bag.

How about padding?

Dear Gorilla Monsoon,

Why aren't the ring posts covered with some sort of padding like the turnbuckles are? Also, where are the matches held that are shown on TV Saturday at noon and 5 p.m.? And we have missed a lot of the better wrestlers for quite awhile, such as Dino Bravo, Mil Mascaras, Larry Zhivko and Tony Goren. Thank you for any information you can give me on them.

Betty Lash
Philadelphia

In many states, but not Pennsylvania, throwing a man's head into the corner post is an automatic disqualification. This should be a standard rule everywhere, as that part of the ring is undoubtedly the most dangerous.

The matches you are viewing Saturday afternoons come from one of two places - Agricultural Hall in Allentown, Pa. or the Field House in Hamburg, Pa.

Dino Bravo is currently working in the Carolinas. Mil Mascaras is on world tour. Larry Zhivko in World Federation and

Tony Goren is in New Zealand.

Refs salaries?

Dear Gorilla Monsoon,

I have two questions: How much do referees make per match, and how does a person become a referee? Also, I'd like to know what happened to some of the old time wrestlers, such as Hans the Great Mortier, Dr. Bill Miller, and Waldo Von Erich.

Gerald Weinsteiger
Douglassville, Pa.

Referees come under the direct jurisdiction of the State Athletic Commission. I'd assume they are paid \$100 or more a night. I suggest you contact the State Athletic Commission for information on becoming a referee. Hans Mortier is in France where he owns an apartment complex. Dr. Bill Miller is an outstanding veterinarian working for the government, and Waldo Von Erich is currently wrestling in Canada.

Good and bad

Dear Gorilla Monsoon,

I am a big fan of professional wrestling. I like the good guys and the bad guys. To tell you the truth, I don't think there's much difference. Where do you draw the line between good guys and bad guys?

Jim LaRosa
Wilmington, Del.

I feel there's a stigma involved with the so-called good guys and bad guys.

For example, if a wrestler who is not familiar to the Philadelphia fans, comes into a match wearing black tights, a black leather jacket and a black hat, he'd automatically be categorized as a bad guy or a dirty wrestler. I feel that it is bad to base opinions about wrestlers like that. Opinions should be based on a wrestler's performance inside and outside the ring.

fat wrestlers

Dear Gorilla,

I am 12 years old, stand 5'2, and weigh 167 pounds. All the kids around my block call me Rollo because I'm so fat. I would like to become a pro wrestler so I can break these kids' noses. I noticed you're pretty fat and became a wrestler. I think I can break heads like you used to. Did you become a wrestler because you were too large to do anything else? Can you tell me how I can become a pro wrestler like you when I get older?

Joe Clement
Philadelphia

Size is not a pre-requisite for becoming a pro wrestler. We have them from 200 pounds to 400 pounds. I have a college degree and didn't have to go into professional wrestling, but I did because I enjoyed the sport so much for my entire amateur life. I suggest you get involved in an amateur wrestling program, either at school or at the YMCA, because you need an awful lot of wrestling background before you can become a professional.

Matching up

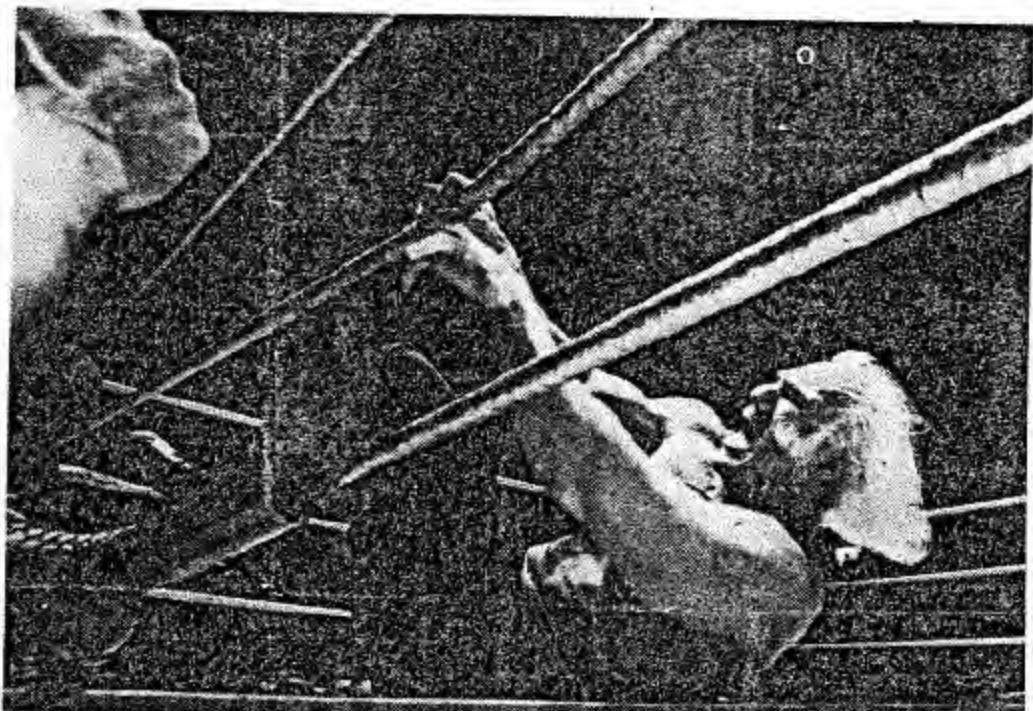
Dear Gorilla,

Would you please explain why two "good guys" never wrestle for the WWWF championship, instead of a "good guy" and a "bad guy" all the time? Most fans would rather see Bob Backlund fight Bruno Sammartino for the championship than see Backlund fight a different thing every month.

Bill Hems
Oaklyn

That's a decision made by the World Wrestling Federation. One must have a certain number of matches under one's belt before he is deemed a No. 1 challenger. Most wrestlers under the World Federation have been in the area for some time - such as Bruno Sammartino, Chief Jay Strongbow and myself, and must have not done the traveling, nor met the number of opponents to be deemed a No. 1 challenger. However such matches have taken place in past. Sammartino wrestled Pedro Morales and Bobo Brazil for the title, for example.

This column, which began previous page, from Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.



Journal file photo by John Stapleton

Superstar Billy Graham, a favorite of Philly wrestling fans, is currently resting at his Arizona home following surgery to remove cancerous growths from his back.

greatest talent to have wrestled in this area in a long time. I have had the opportunity to speak with Mr. Graham at the Philadelphia International Airport. Not only is he a perfect gentleman, but he is a credit to professional wrestling. In the hectic rush of his travels, I have seen him put down his suitcase and sign autographs for anyone who asks for it.

Jack J. Milici
Philadelphia

Superstar Billy Graham is currently resting at home in Arizona. He hasn't done much wrestling since leaving the WWF, with the exception of a tour of the Orient.

Upon returning, he had to seek medical assistance for several large growths on his back, which were found to be cancerous. They have since been removed and fortunately everything seems to be A-okay. I would expect him to be back on the wrestling scene in the near future. And I'm sure Philadelphia is one place he'd

love to come back to. Besides being an outstanding wrestler, he is a gentleman inside and outside the ring as well, as you stated.

On the money

Dear Gorilla:

How many months is a wrestler away from home compared to pro athletes in other sports? How do their families feel when they go away? How much does a wrestler make a year?

James Doney
Upper Darby

Unlike other pro sports, wrestling is not seasonal. Professional wrestling continues 12 months a year. Being a wrestler brings with it a hectic travel schedule, covering not only the U.S., but Japan, Australia, South America and Europe, which requires a great deal of time away from the family.

It takes a special type of woman to be the wife of a professional wrestler, be-

cause of the enormous amount of time spent away from home. I do, however, think the sport is rewarding enough so that one could rationalize for it. Personally, I know how much my wife can take. Once in a while, I'll take her to Puerto Rico or the Bahamas. Then I know she's ready for x-amount more bouts.

I regret not being home with my family, but it beats punching a clock everyday from 9-5. When the school calendar begins, I try to adjust my schedule accordingly.

On the average, a pro wrestler travels 75,000 miles a year by car, and another \$0,000 to 100,000 miles by air. The average preliminary wrestler can make between \$30,000-\$40,000 a year. We have some outstanding special attraction individuals who make \$80,000 a year and a handful of 12 or 15 professional wrestlers in the country who make in excess of \$100,000 a year.

In This Corner

Gorilla Monsoon



Spectrum grudge match just might get bloody

Sammartino, Volkoff meet here Oct. 20

This week's personality profile will be scratched in order to discuss in-depth pro-motor Phil Zelko's bouts scheduled for the Spectrum Oct. 20.

Let's start with what I feel will be the most exciting match of the night which will be Nicoli Volkoff facing the legend, Bruno Sammartino. This is a real grudge match and I wouldn't expect to see too many wrestling holds. Bruno has vowed to end the career of Nicoli Volkoff.

As most wrestling fans know, Bruno does color commentary for Championship and All-Star Wrestling and several weeks ago Bruno was interviewing Volkoff and his manager Fred Blassie. Blassie was trying to humiliate Bruno by claiming his man to be the most powerful in wrestling today.

Bruno challenged Volkoff to an arm wrestling contest right there and then, but before the men could lock their hands Blassie struck Sammartino from behind with his cane. Then Volkoff and Blassie kicked and punched the fallen Sammartino until Santino and I came to his rescue.

Bruno's shirt was torn from his body, however, the physical damage was not as bad as the humiliation he suffered. I certainly wouldn't want to be in Volkoff's shoes come Oct. 20.

The title match between Bob Backlund and Pat Patterson should be a beauty, matching two champions. Backlund holding the world's title and Patterson the newly-crowned Intercontinental champion. Patterson claims his title means more than Backlund's because he had to defeat six other continental champions. Patterson is undoubtedly the greatest threat to Bob's title since he won it.

Undefeated Swede Hansen will push Ivan Putski to the limit in a special attraction match. And yours truly will be taking on Jerry Valiant.

I'm sure Jerry will be trying to use me as a possible stepping stone to a title shot. I can only say at this point in my career I'm not going to let the likes of Jerry Valiant use me for anything. I don't look for this match to last too long.

I tip my hat to promoter Phil Zelko for putting together such a wrestling spectacular as we'll be seeing Oct. 20 at the Spectrum.

* * *

And now to the mailbag.

Which twitch?

Dear Gorilla Monsoon:

I really enjoy wrestling and one thing I would like to know is why S.T. Jones, when he could easily win a match and get his man, has to step and twitch his butt. Then it's all over. I would really love to see him just once win a match.

As for the Valiant Brothers and Greg Valentine, boy do I wish I was a wrestler.

Mrs. Elizabeth Seeger
Philadelphia

S.T. Jones was many of his matches, whether he twitches his butt or not. S.T. Jones is the type of wrestler who fears no one and often times challenges and signs contracts above and beyond his ability.



Bruno Sammartino, shown here trying to break Ivan Koloff's arm, has a score to settle with Nicoli Volkoff after a humiliating incident several weeks ago. Journal file photo

I knew many people such as yourself who would like to get the opportunity to take a shot at the likes of the Valiants. The only problem is they might take a shot back.

Bulldog baw

Dear Gorilla Monsoon:

Do you think that Bulldog Brower should have been allowed to come back to the Wrestling Federation?

Chris Paul
Philadelphia

I think Bulldog Brower, who is currently contracted to be at the Spectrum Oct. 20, has had a very successful career in professional wrestling regardless of the way he went about it. And his 290-pound frame certainly makes him a worthy adversary.

Return of Rivers

Dear Mr. Monsoon:

My all-time favorite wrestler was Victor Rivers. I think he would have been the W.W.F. champ had Bruno Sammartino not been in the area. Would you please tell me what caused Victor to leave and eventually

return a changed man with hate and violence in his heart?

Bill Heins
Oaklyn, N.J.

The reason for Victor Rivers leaving this area was that a better offer was made to him on the West Coast. And while there he fell under the guidance of one Fred Blassie. Unfortunately, men will do strange things for money. I was very unhappy to see Victor Rivers under the tutelage of Blassie. I would have loved to see him stay here in the World Wrestling Federation where he could have done extremely well and possibly have captured a title. But that's what makes the world go round.

* * *

Here's a special note to all wrestling fans. I've just been informed that a gigantic billboard featuring Bob Backlund has been erected on the Schuylkill Expressway just above 30th Street going towards the Spectrum. I'm sure everyone will be interested in seeing it.

In This Corner

Gorilla Monsoon



Andre the Giant fears title win

This week's personality profile is the very colorful Andre the Giant.

Born on a farm in Mollien, France, Jan. 20, 1949, Andre literally drove his parents crazy as a child when it seemed every month he outgrew his clothes and never outgrew his appetite.

As a teenager he was already seven-feet-tall and, when Andre's family moved to Paris, he became involved in soccer and rugby and was a great pro wrestling fan who never missed the matches were offered in Paris.

Andre, after asking many questions, was taken under the wing of the Flying Frenchman Edouard Carpenter and after six months of vigorous training he had his first match. The rest is history.

Seven-feet five

Andre came to Canada to wrestle, was spotted by promoter Vince McMahon Sr. and immediately was placed under contract. Andre is currently seven-feet-five inches tall and weighs close to 500 pounds, however he is extremely agile and quick for his size. After some seven years as a professional, Andre has the unique distinction of never having been pinned in a wrestling match.

Never a champ

Oddly enough, although undefeated, Andre has never won a championship bout. When asked why, Andre states he will not sign for title bouts because he fears that as a champion he could no longer be the free soul that he is today.

Andre is in great demand by wrestling promoters all over the world, so he is in a position to wrestle when and where he wishes and knows the arenas will be packed.

In his free time Andre enjoys playing cards and most of all going to the movies. However, he has to pick his theaters carefully, because most of the seats will not accommodate his enormous body.

Andre to date has made a tremendous impression on the pro wrestling scene and only the future will tell what mark he will leave. In my 20 years affiliated with pro sports I have found Andre to be the

most easygoing and carefree man I've ever met. If he likes you, he loves you; if he dislikes you, stay out of his way.

* * *

Now to the mailbag. Media coverage lacking

Mr. Monsoon:

Professional wrestling draws large crowds at the Spectrum and it seems to be a popular sport.

Why don't the local newspapers' sports sections provide photos and articles concerning the sport? The wrestling results from the Spectrum that appear in the newspapers are printed in such small print the reader must use a magnifying glass to read them. Why don't the newspapers provide better coverage of this sport?

Your article in the Journal is the only wrestling news the fans can read. Thank you.

William Gare
Philadelphia

I couldn't agree with you more. The class shown by the Journal in covering professional wrestling leaves the other newspapers way behind, however I'm sure that with wrestling fans such as yourself out there, the coverage can only continue to increase in the coming years.

Wrestlers as refs

Dear Gorilla Monsoon:

Why does the WWF allow wrestlers to referee a wrestling match?

Bob Barron Jr.
Philadelphia

The World Wrestling Federation does not appoint referees. Referees are appointed by the different state athletic commissions and the only time a professional wrestler will referee a match is by direct request from an athletic commission. Many times the matches



At 7-5, 500 pounds, is it any wonder Frenchmen Andre the Giant has never been pinned?

they are used to referee are of such great magnitude that the average referee would not be able to handle the situation. Therefore they seek out certain individuals. Not everyone can qualify as a referee, but there are a few who do an excellent job and are to be commended. It's not an easy task.

Odd couple

Dear Mr. Monsoon:

I attend championship wrestling everytime at Ag Hall. I heard a rumor that I cannot believe. I heard that about seven years ago Jim Valiant teamed up with Chief Jay Strongbow. I find it hard to believe. Please give me some details.

Joe Konrath
Allentown

I believe that particular pairing did occur. At the time Jim Valiant was just breaking into professional wrestling, was not involved with any of the other Valiants who were out on the road. As a professional, signing open contracts, it's possible to be teamed up with anyone. And if my memory serves me right, they made a very durable team until Jim Valiant was swayed by the likes of Captain Lou Albano.

Where's Buggy?

Dear Gorilla:

In your opinion, who would win a round-robin tournament between the champions of the WWF, NWA and AWA? How would the winner stand against Bruno Sammartino?

Whatever became of Buggy McGraw?

Edward Rosenberg
Philadelphia

As far-fetched as it may seem, I don't believe a tournament of that nature could ever take place. However, should it, I would have to bet on Nick Bachwinkle being the winner. It certainly would be a most interesting match between he and Bruno Sammartino and I would venture to say that Bruno would end up the victim. I would like to see Nicky Bachwinkle make a tour of the WWF because a man of his skill and ability is an asset to professional wrestling.

Buggy McGraw is currently wrestling in the Carolinas and doing extremely well. He's looking forward to returning to the World Wrestling Federation in the near future. Buggy spent most of 1978 on a world tour including Japan, Australia, South America and Europe on which he did extremely well.

Big grudge match

This Saturday at the Spectrum the big grudge match between Bruno Sammartino and Nikolai Volkoff and the outstanding championship match between world champion Bob Backlund and intercontinental champion Pat Patterson will take place. This undoubtedly will be one of the greatest wrestling attractions ever to appear at the Spectrum.

I also want all Journal readers and wrestling fans in the Harrisburg area this Friday night, championship wrestling will be returning to the Zembo Masque featuring Greg Valentine, Chief Jay Strongbow, Rick (the Bulldog) Brower and Dominic DeNucci.

In closing, once again I would like to congratulate Spectrum promoter Phil Zacko on the outstanding booking and contracting of matches that will be appearing at the Spectrum. One week soon we will do a personality profile on Zacko so that wrestling fans can get a more in-depth view of this wrestling promoter.

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania



In This Corner

Gorilla Monsoon

I want to devote a few lines this week to promoter Phil Zacko, who is putting on the Aug. 18 wrestling show at the Spectrum.

I just found out this past weekend that Zacko had to out-bid six other major arenas here on the East Coast for the Indian Strap Match between Greg Valentine and Chief Jay Strongbow.

It's going to be a great night of wrestling. One of the biggest cards ever presented at the Spectrum.

Now, let's get into the mailbag.

Dear Gorilla:

I enjoy watching Dominic DeNucci, Bob Backlund, Andre The Giant...I do not enjoy The Valiant Brothers or their manager, Lou Albano.

I would appreciate any information on Dominic DeNucci.

Mrs. Eleanor DiCinto
Freeland, Pa.

Dominic DeNucci is a direct descendent from Italy who now lives in Pittsburgh. I know a couple of his hobbies. He's a handball and racquet ball player of note.

Dear Gorilla:
I am very glad to see that finally

a newspaper in the Philadelphia area has finally taken wrestling seriously by picking a great wrestler such as yourself to take the time to answer many questions the fans have. I have been following wrestling since I was a little boy, and I will say that we could never see enough wrestling.

One question that I have is: Why don't the managers such as the Grand Wizard and Fred Blasius come to the Spectrum during the matches. Myself and many other fans would like to see them once in a while.

Donald Ruberti
West Chester

Most of those managers are reluctant about live appearances in arenas because they get pummeled very severely with all kinds of flying debris. And they have a heckuva time getting in and out of buildings because fans are after them constantly to harrass them. It certainly won't add to their longevity to make appearances very often in these major arenas, or small arenas for that matter, too. They always get hurt. The vehicle they travel in always gets demolished.

It's a hazardous duty for managers to make appearances. However, they do on occasion appear at the Garden and often times they will appear at the Spectrum. And many times they will appear at smaller clubs. That's not to say they aren't there. A guy like Lou Albano, Captain Lou, films a great deal. He films most of his men in his stable and some of the matches of his men's upcoming opponents. But Lou could be in there dressed as a woman...or a bum. A guy in drag. It's hard to tell with Lou because he's a little soft anyway.

Dear Gorilla:

Why in the world did you ever turn goodie? We loved you when you were from Outer Mongolia and could only grunt. You have no charisma in the role of a goodie. I loved it when you crippled people. There is no good bad guy left who could cripple as you did. I still think you are the best.

Jerry Zollo
Lansdale, Pa.

Actually, I was from Manchuria. At that time I had a manager who was Wild Red Berry and I gave him 25 percent of my money and did exactly what he told to do and I made a good living. When he passed away I did my own booking and my own thing and I decided it was easier to go the other way.

Dear Gorilla:

Your paper is the only paper that covers this great sport (more than just the few lines in the Sunday Inquirer). However, I feel that a sport that is as popular as wrestling is ought to be covered more than what it is.

Chuck Yeager
Conshohocken

It's the old stigma that has been with the wrestling world for many, many years. It's currently being changed. In fact, the media is now seeking us out in regards to professional wrestling. They realize it is a sport and we are drawing fantastic crowds everywhere and can't be ignored. For years and years and years, the only space we could get in the newspapers was to literally buy the space. Now, it's quite the contrary.

Dear Gorilla:

I am a great wrestling fan. And a good fan of yours and other great wrestlers. And I would like to know are all the kicks, punches, slams, etc., completely real with full force? Because on T.V. some of it looks fake.

Bernie Allen

The kicks and punches...yes they are. There is an unwritten law in our profession that you don't punch to the face, you don't punch to the eye, to the nose or mouth area because you could bust somebody open every night. Most of the blows are taken to the neck, the chest and the back. When you become a professional wrestler you become accustomed to taking those type blows. You accustom your body to taking those blows.

Spectator Sports

Sunday Inquirer

Spectator Sports

In This Corner

Gorilla Monsoon**Jimmy Valiant stays cool**

This week's personality profile is Handsome Jimmy Valiant. Born Aug. 6, 1949, in Chicago, Jimmy attended Thornton Fractional South High School where he played football and wrestled for four years. He continued his education at the University of Indiana where he once again starred in football and wrestling and was sought by the Chicago Bears. He chose professional wrestling instead of professional football.

As a pro Jimmy has done exceptionally well, along with his two brothers John and Jerry. Together they have held the World Wrestling Federation tag team title, the West Coast tag team belts, and Jimmy, as an individual, has also held the Southern States Heavyweight championship.

Jim currently makes his home outside Chicago with his wife, Clara, and three lovely daughters. Jim is a licensed physiotherapist and would like to pursue that field upon retiring from the ring.

His life ambition is to attain the world championship belt. In his spare time he enjoys big game hunting.

Jim's philosophy: Just be cool.

Now, as I promised in last week's column, I want to give you the names of the men who will be appearing in the Battle Royal at the Spectrum Saturday, Nov. 17 in the supporting match of the return bout between Pat Patterson and Bob Backlund.

The Battle Royal wrestlers, vying for a \$10,000 prize are: Swede Hanson, Hussein Arab, Bulldog Brower, Bob Duncan, Johnny Rodz, Jose Estrada, the three Valiants, Chief Jay Strongbow, Tito Santana, Moose Monroe, Ivan Putski, Larry Zbysko, myself, Dominic DeNucci, Davey O'Hannon and Ted DiBiase.

In addition to the return match and the Battle Royal, eight other great bouts will be paired by promoter Phil Zacko from among those eliminated from the Battle Royal.

Now to the mailbag:

Mr. Monsoon:

Why does the WWF continually put up with Lou Albano, the Grand Wizard and Fred Blassie interfering in important matches like when the Grand Wizard revived Greg Valentine to put the figure four on Chief Jay Strongbow? Albano is always jumping in the ring to save his tag teams like the Valiants, Lumberjacks and Executioners from certain defeat. And Blassie attacks wrestlers with his infamous cane as his proteges Swede Hanson and Nicoli Volkoff throw them out of the ring. All this proves is that these managers don't have faith in their wrestlers.

Mike Mathis

Philadelphia

The World Wrestling Federation, since the passing of its past president Willie Gilsenberg, has fallen under the rule of Mr. Shima of Japan. Consequently he is not abreast of everything that happens at the moment here in the United States, but is certainly made aware of it as time goes by. I understand that some heavy fines have been placed upon individuals such as Albano, Blassie and the Grand Wizard and on some of the wrestlers as well, and I'm sure in the future the World Wrestling Federation and the different state athletic associations will be scrutinizing the activities of wrestling managers more closely.

Dear Mr. Monsoon:

How come no titles change hands at the Spectrum, only at Madison Square Garden? Why don't they have wrestling twice a month like on the second and 19th of a month?

Mark Anthony Grandinetti

North Hills, Pa.

Titles do not always change hands at Madison Square Garden. A world title changed hands in Philadelphia when Stan Stasiak defeated Pedro Morales. The World Tag Team title has changed many times in Philadelphia. The North American Heavyweight title recently changed hands in Allentown, so I believe that statement is incorrect.

The availability of dates at the Spectrum are few and far between, therefore we only can get one shot every month, or sometimes one every six weeks. We would like to be in there on a monthly basis. The talent that is necessary to produce these events certainly wouldn't be available on a bi weekly basis.

Dear Mr. Monsoon:

I was wondering what happened to Tony Garea since he and Harry Zbysko lost the title to the pig Valiant Brothers. I am a big fan of wrestling. Can you tell me if the Polish Power, Ivan Putski, and Tito Santana are going to wrestle the Valiant Brothers. They are one of the best tag teams I ever saw.



Journal photo by Steve Hill

Johnny Rivera massages Bulldog Brower's throat during a recent match. Brower will be involved in the Battle Royal Nov. 17.

One more thing. I was watching wrestling on TV and wondered why the ref can't stop outside help like Lou Albano?

David Chan
Glassboro, N.J.

Tony Garea, since leaving the World Wrestling Federation, spent a short period of time in the Carolinas, then went back to his native land of New Zealand where he's doing extremely well. However, he is being approached by Larry Zbysko to return to the WWF to get another crack at the title.

Wrestling fans in general, I'm sure, are aware of the fact by now that Tito Santana and Ivan Putski are the newly-crowned World Tag Team champions, having defeated the Valiant Brothers in Madison Square Garden Monday night, Oct. 22.

Referees have the authority under the rules of the Pennsylvania State Athletic Commission to stop any match, at any time, and disqualify any individuals or participants for outside interference. This is purely at the discretion of the referees, who, incidentally, work directly for the state athletic commissions and are in no way sponsored, paid or booked by the World Wrestling Federation.

Dear Mr. Monsoon:

I have one question for you. How come Bob Backlund doesn't wrestle once in a while on TV? I understand he has a busy schedule to keep but when Bruno was the champ he always took time to wrestle on TV.

H. McCollam
Philadelphia

Not too many people are anxious to wrestle Bob Backlund on a syndicated television program. If they lose they would be beaten in the eyes of millions of people. In addition, Backlund's schedule is so demanding that, at the present time, television bouts are out of the question as far as the WWF is concerned. However, this does not mean you might not see Bob Backlund on your television in the future.

Dear Gorilla:

How the hell did Jerry (Crusher) Blackwell get into this year's World's Strongest Man competition on the CBS Sports Spectacular? While it's true pro wrestlers have been in each of the three annual competitions there are certainly many grapplers who out-muscle Blackwell — Bruno Sammartino, Nicoli Volkoff, Dick the Bruiser and yourself included.

Bob Langnas
Philadelphia

I wasn't aware the Crusher Blackwell was involved in the World's Strongest Man competition. In the event that he was, I don't know how he got in there. He must have had some pretty strong connections because it certainly takes a great deal of good connections to get involved in the world's strongest men's competition since they are a very selective organization.



In This Corner Gorilla Monsoon

This week's personality profile is Ken Patera. It would take more than one column to do justice to Ken and all his accomplishments, so we'll just give the highlights.

Ken was born and raised in Portland, Oregon and after completing high school went on to Brigham Young University where he was a record-breaking shotputter and discus thrower as well as an unbelievable weight lifter. In 1968 Patera made his first appearance at the Pan American Games, completely outclassed the opposition and won the meet. Ken followed up by winning in the Pan American games of 1969, 70 and 71.

Then came the dream of every amateur athlete — a chance to compete in the Olympics. The year was 1972, the location Munich, Germany. Ken had trained all his life for this moment and when it was all over he stood proudly on the platform and received a bronze medal for the United States.

Many sportswriters feel that if Ken had not competed with a back injury, he might have captured a gold. Nevertheless, it was an unbelievable performance by the young man from Oregon and his name is forever inscribed on the Olympic record books.

Upon returning to the United States Ken was besieged with all kinds of offers from movies to pro football. Ken turned down all these offers to pursue a career in professional wrestling. Ken received his early training in the AWA organization and was under the watchful eye of ring veteran Vern Gagne. Ken left the AWA after beating all the big names there, including Gagne, and after having difficulty obtaining a title shot. The title holders seemed to be doing everything possible to avoid Ken Patera. In desperation Ken sought out world-renowned manager Lou Albano and became part of his stable.

Ken has mastered one of the most feared holds in wrestling, the swinging neck breaker which is really nothing more than a full nelson but with Ken's unbelievable strength it's transformed into a crippling

Patera one of the best

hold; as can be attested to by Billy Whitewolf, Kevin Sullivan, Johnny Rivera and Juan Lopez. All these men were hospitalized by the swinging neckbreaker.

Ken claims to be the strongest man in professional wrestling with the possible exception of Bruno Sammartino, who he says is No. 2. Ken is now appearing once again in the World Wrestling Federation and to everyone's surprise has taken the Grand Wizard as his manager. Ken states he's here for one reason only — to take Bob Backlund's title and retire from professional wrestling.

We've only touched briefly on Ken Patera and I hope it stimulates some questions.

Now to the mailbag:

Dear Gorilla:

When I was watching wrestling on TV this past week I saw you come to the rescue of Dominick DeNucci against the Valiant Brothers. You broke up a three-against-one combination. And again I saw you escort Fred Blassie back to the dressing room when DeNucci was wrestling

Swede Hanson. Why do you always come to the aid of better wrestlers and never help a fair one like Johnny Rivera or Steve King?

Donal D. Leadley
Elm, N.J.

I can only come when I am at ringside. I am not always available and at the matches. When I do see an injustice being done and nothing being done about it, I will get involved. Unfortunately I'm not around all the time.

Dear Gorilla:

I really enjoy your column and always look forward to it. It's about time the newspapers take pro wrestling seriously. I have a few questions and I would appreciate it if you would answer them. I was watching wrestling on television and Captain Louis Albano was talking about the Valiant Brothers' wrestling moves. I am unfamiliar with two of them — the step over toe hold and the chicken wing. I would like to know what they are.

Also, I would like to know about one of my favorite wrestlers, the Columbian Jaguar. Even though I only saw him once, and he lost so badly he had to be carried off on a stretcher, I really like his leopard skin outfit.

J.F. Bearwoof
Flourtown, Pa.

The step over toe hold is when a man is laying on his back grasping either leg and stepping over it with your left leg and twisting inwardly.

A chicken wing is a hammerlock with pressure applied away from the body — in other words, drawing the arm away from the back. This causes a great deal of pain and is a very effective hold.

That is the reason we don't see the Columbian Jaguar around any more. Things got too hot for him in the World Wrestling Federation. He was not big enough or strong enough to survive in the WWF where super heavyweights reign.

Below: Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

In This Corner

Gorilla Monsoon



Nov. 14, 1979 / PHILADELPHIA JOURNAL

This Saturday is the super-spectacular wrestling card at the Spectrum featuring a special return match between Pat Patterson and Bob Backlund. In addition, a real crowd pleaser, an 18 man over-the-top Battle Royal will be held with \$10,000 to the winner. Everyone who is anyone in pro wrestling has signed up for this one namely the three Valiants, the Arab, Big Bob Duncum, Bulldog Brower, Chief Jay Strongbow, Tito Santana, Ted DiBiase, Dominic DeNucci, Larry Zbysko, myself and the Polish Power Ivan Putski.

And if that's not enough, Spectrum promoter Phil Zacko has put together eight other outstanding bouts paired from the Battle Royal. The Spectrum will be rocking.

* * *

This week's personality profile is Polish Power Ivan Putski. Born Jan. 30, 1941 in Yuszciebscyp, a small town in Poland, Ivan and his family were placed in a labor camp at the outbreak of World War II and remained there until the war ended.

In 1951, Ivan's entire family came to the United States as displaced persons and went to work on a farm in Texas. Ivan's dad was a carpenter and invented a unique hinge which the United States government bought, really putting the Putski family in good shape.

Ivan attended Travish High School where he was an outstanding football star and he was recruited by Southwest State University. While at Southwest, he made the NAIA All-American team. Upon graduation, he was sought after by the Dolphins and the Oilers, but Ivan chose to play with the Toronto Argonauts in Canada.

Several years later he was signed by the Lions, where he played for two years before a serious knee injury ended his career.

While traveling in Oklahoma, performing unbelievable feats of strength, he was approached by a wrestling promoter and started his professional career. He's had a most impressive career, having held the Texas heavyweight championship and currently co-holding World Wrestling Federation tag team championship.

Ivan makes his home in Austin, Tex. with his wife, Nancy and four children, Ken, 17, Kelly, 14, Scott 13, and Brent 11.

Surprisingly enough, Ivan spends many hours growing tropical plants and enjoys training with his entire family and most all water sports.

Ivan would like to win the world's title and retire and open a recreation center.

Now to the mailbag:

Dear Mr. Monsoon:

I would like to know when Larry Zbysko and Bruno Sammartino are going to team up. If they do, I hope it will be on TV because I never saw them as a team before.

Annette Perez
Franklinville, N.J.

There is a very good possibility that Larry Zbysko and Bruno Sammartino could form a tag team partnership. It certainly would be unique since Larry Zbysko is the only professional wrestler ever trained exclusively by the living legend Bruno Sammartino. It certainly would be an awesome combination and very difficult to defeat. I definitely would like to see it happen myself.

Dear Gorilla Monsoon:

I would like to know if there is an address I can write to ask Tito Santana or Bob Backlund for autographed pictures or to congratulate them on a victory. How come there are so many uneven matches, such as Swede Hanson against Fred Marzeno? Also, why do most wrestlers leave the WWF area after they lose a title?

Richard Cohen

Philadelphia

Once again the mailing address for all professional wrestlers currently in the World Wrestling Federation is Wrestling Associations, PO Box 877, Willingboro, N.J. 08046.

All top stars such as Swede Hanson have open contracts on promoters' desks for television wrestling and the newcomers or upstarts, such as Fred Marzeno, are most anxious to sign these, feeling if they should be lucky enough to get a victory on a syndicated television program before millions of people it would immediately enhance their careers. However, nine times out of 10, they're going to end up on the short end of the stick. But there's always that 10th time.

I'm not sure it's exactly true that wrestlers, upon losing a title, leave the World Wrestling Federation, as can be witnessed by Bruno Sammartino, Larry Zbysko, Fred DiBiase, the Valiant Brothers and many others who have lost their titles and still remain in the World Wrestling Federation. The name of the game, though, is money, and many of them do leave to look for new titles.

Dear Gorilla Monsoon:

Where did Peter Maivia go? Why doesn't Bob Backlund wrestle on Saturdays, and where are Saturday's wrestling matches held?

Christopher Bridgeforth

Philadelphia

High Chief Peter Maivia is currently in his native islands of Samoa where, if he chose, he wouldn't have to wrestle or do anything else for the rest of his life. He would be completely supported by the Samoan people because he is a high chief. I am sure in the near future he will be returning to professional wrestling because once it's in your blood it's very difficult to just walk away from it.

I am assuming when you say that Bob Backlund does not wrestle on Saturdays you are referring to our television programs at which Backlund very seldom wrestles due to his extremely heavy schedule. The wrestling programs that you are viewing are produced in one of two spots: Agricultural Hall in Allentown and the Hamburg Field House in Hamburg, Pa.

Who's after Bob's belt?

This week's featured personality is Chief Jay Strongbow. The Chief was born in Pawhuska, Okla. and is very proud of his heritage and the abilities which have allowed him to be among the greats of professional wrestling.

Jay first made his presence known to the World Wrestling Federation in 1971 and overnight won the admiration and respect of the wrestling community. Jay is very popular with wrestling fans and unselfishly gives much of his free time to charitable organizations. He is always ready to talk to fans and sign autographs.

The Chief has had many serious injuries over the years, but probably none worse than that given to him by Greg Valentine. Valentine used the figure-four leg lock to dislocate and tear most of the ligaments in Jay's left leg, causing the Chief to be bedridden for over five weeks. The growing feud between these two individuals, I'm sure, is not over.

Strongbow has held the following titles since becoming a pro: North American champion, Southern States champion and co-holder of the World Tag Team championship.

In his recreational time Jay enjoys bowling, racquetball, hunting and fishing and too many other outdoor activities to mention. The only complaint Chief Jay Strongbow has is that professional wrestling does not allow him enough time to spend with his wife and son on their lovely ranch in Georgia.

* * *

For all the wrestling fans in the Philadelphia area the next big show at the Spectrum will be held Saturday, Jan. 12. Promoter Phil Zacko is contracting matches for that date and in a week or so we should have some announcements to make.

Now into the mailing:
Dear Gorilla:
Who is Bob Backlund going to defend his belt against next?

Christopher Bridgeforth
Philadelphia

I really don't know who the No. 1 challenger is. The World Wrestling Federation hasn't let anything out yet. There are a number of men in the area who could be deemed No. 1 challenger, including Cowhey Bob Duncan, Olympia strongman Ken Patera, and the most recent super-heavyweight on our scene, Hulk Hogan.

I'm sure that Phil Zacko is just waiting for the announcement from the World Wrestling Federation as to which man will get a crack at Backlund's title.

The rumor mill

Dear Gorilla:
My friend and I were talking to Bruno Sammartino's son and he said that Bruno is going to fight Bob Backlund for the title and beat him, then retire and give the title to Backlund.

I'm not joking because I did talk to him. So, Mr. Monsoon, tell me if it's true or not and if so where is it going to be and when.



In This Corner

with Gorilla Monsoon

I have one more question. Where did Bob Backlund defend his title against the Sheik?

Joey Carroll
Pennsauken

I don't know where you ran in David, Bruno Sammartino's son, other than if you went to Pittsburgh. And if your dad and he told you that I really don't know where he got his information because, to the best of my knowledge, Bruno has no intention of wrestling Backlund and does not want the world title as the schedule would be too demanding for him. Bruno is sort of semi-retired and loves it that way.

Bob Backlund defended his title against the infamous Sheik at Cobo Hall in Detroit.

Blood lines

Dear Mr. Monsoon:
Are Johnny Rivera and Victor Rivera related?

Are Stan Hansen and Swede Hansen related?

Do you think the Samoans will take the Tag Team championship from Ivan Putski and Tito Santana?

Mike Anderson
Wilmington, Del.

Johnny Rivera and Victor Rivera are definitely not related, and there is no relationship between the Hansens, Stan and Swede.

The Samoans are Johnny Come-Laties and have yet to meet formidable enough opponents for me to make a judgment as to whether they have the necessary skills and abilities to beat the likes of Putski and Santana. It will take a very formidable team to uncrown the tag team champions.



PHOTOGRAPH BY VINTAGE/WIDEWORLD
Chief Jay Strongbow does his war dance in the Spectrum ring.

PHOTOGRAPH BY VINTAGE/WIDEWORLD, APR. 26, 1979



In This Corner

with Gorilla Monsoon

Dusty Rhodes gets rematch

This week's personality profile is about Golden Boy Arnold Skaaland.

Arnold was born in White Plains, N.Y. and attended White Plains High School where he had an outstanding four years of football, baseball, boxing and wrestling. As a matter of fact, he was the only man ever to win a state championship in both boxing and wrestling in New York.

Upon graduation he entered the U.S. Marine Corps where, in 1942, he was with Carlson's Raiders at Guadalcanal and Munda. He later went with the first Marine Division to Guam and Okinawa.

After four years with the Marine Corps he returned to civilian life where he played semi-pro football with the White Plains All-Stars. Arnold was introduced to professional wrestling by Rudi Dusek and had his first match at Columbia Park, N.J. against the famous Les Ryan, the All-American star from Holy Cross. As a professional he held the following titles: Southern States Heavyweight champion; Pacific Coast champion; British Columbia heavyweight champion. He has wrestled such greats as Jimmy Londas, Lou Thesz, Bobby Bruns, Bill Longson and Leroy McGurich.

Skaaland started managing the professional career of Bruno Sammartino in 1963 and has been the outstanding manager of record for the past decade. Upon Bruno's retirement, Arnold purchased the contract of Bob Backlund, realizing the great potential of this young wrestler — and rightly so, because today Backlund is the world champion.

It certainly is a pleasure to have been associated with Arnold Skaaland these many years. I've found him to be a perfect gentleman and an asset to the sport of wrestling.

Dear Mr. Monsoon:

I would like to know if Baron Mike Scicluna ever had or was part of any championship belt.

Also I would like to know how you feel about Dusty Rhodes winning the NWA championship belt and the way he lost it one week later.

Harold Hurwitz
Philadelphia

I don't believe that Mike Scicluna ever held a championship title with the possible exception of a tag team title. I am ambiguous about that because it seems to me that I saw a picture of him with a tag team title belt — but not from this area. Mike is currently wrestling in Hawaii and doing extremely well.

I felt very good about Dusty beating Harley Race for the NWA championship title and although there was quite a bit of controversy about the way Race got the title back, one must understand that different states have different rules as far as titles are concerned.

For example, here in the East, the only way a title can change hands is through pin fall or submission, however in many other parts of the country, a disqualification, count out or injury could cost you the title. I believe that a rematch has already been scheduled and will take place in Madison Square Garden in December.

Dear Mr. Monsoon:

I was wondering if you could tell me how I could send a birthday card to Steve Travis. I know he is currently wrestling in Florida and he told me his birthday is Dec. 13. Since it is getting close to that date, I'd really like the address so that Steve knows his fans haven't forgotten him.

Also, I just want to say that I love your column and I was wondering if you planned a profile on Steve or Roddy Piper. Even though Roddy only appeared twice on TV I saw him a few times in New York and I really liked him a lot.

Michael Godshall
Lansdale

You need merely send your card to Florida Championship Wrestling, North Albany Street, Tampa, Fla., and I'm sure Steve will get it.

As far as personalities profiles on the men you mentioned, I'm sure they will be covered sooner or later. The profiles will be going on for some time and we'll try to do everybody.

Duncum biggest threat to Backlund

This week's personality profile is the man who is considered the No. 1 challenger to the World Wrestling Federation heavyweight crown held by Bob Backlund, and an extreme threat to Backlund's title.

Big Bob Duncum was born and raised in Austin, Texas, where he spent his high school days at Porter and Travis High Schools. During his school years he compiled some very successful football honors, including most valuable player and all-conference. Upon graduation, Bob was given a scholarship to West Texas State University where he became a football star and made All-State three years in succession.

Bob was so impressive that he was drafted by the Cardinals. He played pro football for five years before turning to professional wrestling. Duncum was introduced to pro wrestling by former champion Dory Funk, and it didn't take long for Bob to get the hang of things.

To date in his career he has held the following titles: brass knuckles champion of Florida, Southern States heavyweight champion and co-holder of the AWA tag team championship.

In his spare time Duncum enjoys snow and water skiing, and, of course, his life's ambition is to become world champion. After retiring from wrestling, Bob would like to raise cattle on his ranch in Texas.

* * *

The next all-star wrestling card at the Spectrum will be held on Saturday, Jan. 12. Promoter Phil Zacko is now in the process of signing contracts for that night. To date he has signed three matches, including yours truly vs. the dangerous Swede Hansen; the Latin Sensation Tito Santana vs. Hulk Hogan; and the Polish Power Ivan Putski vs. Olympic strongman Ken Patera.

The Patera-Putski match would be a main event in any arena in the entire country, however, Zacko is still signing top-ranked contenders for the Jan. 12 card. I will have further news next week as the remaining bouts on the card.

Now to the mailbag:

Dear Mr. Monsoon:

What do Lou Albano and the Grand Wizard have up their sleeves? They are bragging on TV that they have something that is going to shock the wrestling world. Do you have any idea what it is?

In this corner

GORILLA MONSOON



And where can I mail a birthday card to Larry Zbysko?

Annette Perez
Franklinville, N.J.

As we stated last week, I am almost positive that Capt. Lou Albano has purchased from the Grand Wizard's stable a wrestler of extremely high merit. However, at the time that this column goes to print, the name of that wrestler has not been disclosed.

Larry Zbysko can receive mail through Wrestling Association, P.O. Box 877, Willingboro, N.J. 08048.

Dear Gorilla:

Can you please settle a dispute between my friend and myself? He thinks that wrestlers from the WWWF wrestle all over the country. I disagree. I think they wrestle only on the East Coast. Which one of us is right?

I also want to comment on the excellent television commentary by Vince McMan and Bruno Sammartino. Does Bruno prefer television to wrestling? I also think Vince likes the "good" wrestlers better than the "bad" wrestlers. He always smiles when interviewing Bob Backlund but he doesn't smile while interviewing the Great Hussein Arab of Iran.

"Woo! Woo!" Coughlin
Philadelphia

I hope there wasn't too much money wagered on this little bet. Professional wrestlers currently wrestling in the World Wrestling Federation wrestle not only here on the East Coast, but all over the United States, Japan, Australia, South America, Puerto Rico, France, Germany, New Zealand and many other countries too numerous to mention. The airplane has made the world a very small place and most countries are easy to get to in 24 hours.

It's not a question of preferring television to wrestling, because Bruno does both. Bruno not only does color commentary for the television shows, he also is involved actively in the squared circle in many arenas throughout the country.

I think most times while Vince McMan is interviewing some of the so-called "black hats" he doesn't know whether he will receive a verbal reply to a question or a physical one. Naturally, he is more at ease interviewing the likes of a Backlund or Ivan Putski or Sammartino.

Dear Mr. Monsoon:
Was Paul Anderson, the Olympic strongman, ever a wrestler? If so, did you ever do battle against him? What were the results of the match or matches? Also, since the current trend among professional athletes seems to be trying their luck in other sports. (For instance Lyle Alzado and Ed Jones with boxing) how do you think the current Olympic strongman Vasili Alexeev would fare as a professional wrestler? The potential is there since he is the strongest human to ever walk the face of the Earth and weighs in at about 350 pounds. What do you think?

Peter B. Allen
Philadelphia

Being the strongest man in the world does not necessarily and automatically make you a good wrestler. Strength, in itself, is not enough. You have to have the basic fundamentals of wrestling, speed and agility and endurance. Most super-heavyweights and strongmen unfortunately do not possess all these necessary ingredients. I have seen many a small man in wrestling make a fool out of a larger man of lesser ability. However, a good little man never ever beat a good big man.

To the best of my knowledge, Paul Anderson had several professional wrestling bouts and found out just what we had already explained, consequently his career as a pro wrestler did not last too long. Everyone in pro wrestling today, to the best of my knowledge, has had some background in amateur wrestling. If they had not they would not be able to survive in the sport of professional wrestling.

Super card is coming

As I promised last week, here are some additional matches slated for the Spectrum Jan. 12. In addition to Patera vs. Putski, and Hanson vs. yours truly, we'll have the great Hussian Arab meeting Larry Zybisco, Johnny Rodz facing the French sensation Rene Goulet, Bulldog Brower meeting a newcomer, Mike Masters, and Jose Estrada trying to get a win over the roughneck, Davey O'Hannan.

Promoter Phil Zacko has told me that there will be two other outstanding bouts on the card. One of them will feature champion Bob Backlund in a title defense, the opponent not yet known. And the Intercontinental heavyweight champion, Pat Patterson, has also signed an open contract and will appear on the card.

The Mexican sensation, Tito Santana, who is currently co-holder of the world tag team title, will face the awesome Hulk Hogan, the 6-7, 225-pound giant who has an impressive undefeated record. I know I'll be out there to watch that one.

This week's personality profile is going to be interrupted so that I may bring you some insight into how professional wrestlers deal with the many physical injuries they receive. Wrestling being an individual sport, many wrestlers enter the ring with injuries which would have the layman home in bed, such as sprains, ligament tears, fractures, stitches and countless contusions and concussions. When 20,000 people pack an arena to see one of their favorites, they don't want to hear that he has a sprained ankle and will be substituted for.

Backlund, the current champ, has stepped into the squared circle with a dislocated shoulder, water on the knee, torn ligaments and countless stitches. I personally can remember back to the early 1960s in the old Madison Square Garden, while opposing Sammartino, having Bruno fracture two of my ribs in the first 30 seconds of the match. And the match continued for another hour and 22 minutes. You can't call time out and send in a replacement.

Let's dip into the mailbag.

Dear Gorilla:

Who did Ted DiBiase beat for the North American title, and what is going to happen to the belt now that Pat Patterson has given it up?

*From a great fan,
Jim Currie
Bristol*

First, Ted DiBiase, to the best of my knowledge, won the

/Wednesday, Dec. 12, 1979

In this corner

GORILLA MONSOON



North American title in Texas from Terry Funk. I believe the North American title at the moment is in the hands of the Worldwide Wrestling Federation, Mr. Shima in Japan, and I'm sure a new tournament will be held to crown a new champion.

Backlund's belt, which is not the one he carries into the ring (that's merely a replica) has gold and stones for an approximate value of \$65,000. If a match were ever to take place between Backlund and Sammartino, I'd say you'd have to pack your lunch, because it's liable to be an all night affair and drag on into the morning.

Dear Gorilla:

Was Andre the Giant ever in a battle royal before. If so, how many times did he win them? When is Andre the Giant coming back to the Spectrum again?

Is Dusty Rhodes ever coming back to the Spectrum again?

What's happened to wrestlers like Golden Terror, Spiros Arion, Billy Graham, the Lumberjacks, Mike Masearos, Professor Toru Tanaka, Mr. Fuji, to name a few?

*James Doney
Upper Darby*

Andre the Giant has been in 35 or 40 battle royals and has yet to be defeated. He should be returning back to the WWWF area in early 1980. He has a very demanding schedule which takes him all over the world.

Dusty Rhodes definitely will be returning to the Spectrum in 1980. Promoter Phil Zacko is currently working out a contractual agreement with him. All the wrestlers you have named are still in professional wrestling. It's a big sport throughout the world and most of these men are working in other areas of the world. If you care to write to them specifically, mail will be forwarded to them at the usual address, Wrestling Associates, PO Box 877, Willingboro, N.J. 08046.

Dear Gorilla:

Do you think the major wrestling alliances will unite in the future? Why or why not?

*Gary Schajkopf
Philadelphia*

I don't believe major alliances will ever unite unless cable TV forces them to. They're predominantly independent contractors and work only in a specific area. However, cable television within the next 10 years may change all that. And that remains to be seen.



In this corner

GORILLA MONSOON

BLOOD match due at Spectrum

Spectrum wrestling fans will get to see a real blood match Jan. 12 when Pat Patterson battles Capt. Lou Albano in a special grudge match.

The match has an interesting history. Several weeks ago Albano purchased Patterson's contract from the Grand Wizard, but Patterson was never notified that his contract had been sold. This he resented very much.

Patterson also has a low opinion of Albano, calling him "a crazy, uncouth slob" and stating that he resents deeply "being in the zoo world of Capt. Lou Albano."

While Patterson's lawyers were trying to find a way to get Pat's contract back, Albano signed a six-man tag team match combining Patterson and the Samoans against Ivan Putski, Tito Santana and Larry Zbysko. During this match Albano and Patterson had a complete falling out, ending up with the Samoans holding Patterson while Albano clobbered him with a chair. Patterson needed several stitches to close the wounds before it was all over.

Promoter Phil Zacko was clever enough to get both these names signed on a contract to appear at the special Spectrum grudge match Saturday, Jan. 12 and it's certainly a feather in his cap.

In addition to the special grudge match, wrestling fans will also see the following bouts Jan. 12: Jose Estrada vs. Dave O'Hanlon; Johnny Rous against Rene Goulet; Bulldog Brower vs. Mike Masters; Hussein Arab taking on Larry Zbysko; a special attraction match with Tito Santana battling Hulk Hogan; Swede Hanson vs. yours truly, Gorilla Monsoon; Ken Patera vs. Ivan Putski; and the main event for the world title, Bob Backlund vs. the World Wrestling Federation's No. 1 challenger Bob Duncum.

And, with the 1980 wrestling season hard upon us, the Spectrum is offering a special. All season ticket holders who purchase their tickets before Jan. 4 can do so for 1979 prices. Choice seats for the 11-bout schedule are available now. For further information contact Pat Dorris, 215-735-0092 at the Spectrum ticket office.

Now to this week's mail.

Dear Gorilla:

What is the job of a wrestling manager? Also, do Fred Blassie, Lou Albano and the Grand Wizard continue to manage their wrestlers after they have left the WWF?

Rick Langnas
Philadelphia

Dear Sir:

The job of a wrestling manager is to book whatever wrestlers are in his stable, take care of their traveling itinerary, scout future opponents, film important matches and constantly seek out new talent for their stables. It is a very hectic career, one which requires a great many hours devoted directly to their business, a great deal of traveling and a great deal of expense. In most cases when a wrestler leaves a particular area he does not give up his manager. Most managers will travel with their wrestlers and give interviews anywhere in the United States. Only when a contract is broken or severed does the relationship between a manager and wrestler break up.

Pros more exciting

Dear Gorilla:

I have just recently become interested in pro

wrestling and I want to know why it is so much different than college wrestling. I think pro wrestling is more exciting.

Also, can you tell me if Bob Backlund, Frank Williams and Steve Travis have nicknames?

Frank (The Hurricane) Crown
Philadelphia

Dear Sir:

Professional wrestling and amateur wrestling certainly are worlds apart. The only direct correlation would be that all professional wrestlers, at one time or another, were involved in amateur wrestling, knowing all the basic skills and fundamentals, for without them they would not be able to survive as professional wrestlers.

However, we deal in excitement. Unfortunately the professional sports that draw big money today are the body contact sports such as football, wrestling, hockey and even basketball, which is not devoted to body contact. For example, in hockey, there is just as much, if not more, crowd reaction when they drop their gloves as when they score a goal.

Bob Backlund, to my knowledge, does not have a nickname. Frank Williams is commonly referred to as The Thumb, being that he lost his thumb in an accident. Steve Travis, former rookie of the year, to the best of my knowledge, had no nickname.

Who's the fastest?

Dear Gorilla:

Who holds the record for the fastest match? Who holds the record for the fastest championship match where the belt changed hands? Is Jack Patera, coach of the Seattle Seahawks, the brother of Ken Patera?

Finally, I have a bet going with my friend Mike Palumbo that Bruno Sammartino beat Buddy Rogers for the belt with a backbreaker, but he insists that it was with the bear hug. Please settle this dispute.

Dan Heim
Philadelphia

Dear Sir:

Yours truly holds the record for the fastest pin, nine seconds. It took place at Boston Gardens, I believe, in 1975. My opponent was the Golden Terror.

The Sammartino-Buddy Rogers match, held in Madison Square Garden in June, 1962, was the quickest championship match, in a time, I believe, of 1:48. That match was terminated with Bruno defeating Rogers with a backbreaker.

Yes, Jack Patera is the brother of the Olympic Strongman Ken Patera.

Hulk Hogan's incredible task

This week's personality profile is Hulk Hogan, who was discovered by the fashion plate of professional wrestling, Fred Blassie, on Muscle Beach in Venice, Calif. The 6-8, 320-pound giant immediately caught Blassie's eye. After signing him to a contract and having him undergo a year of secret training, Blassie introduced him to the world of professional wrestling.

To date Hogan has compiled a very impressive undefeated win streak. In his latest victory, he defeated the North American Heavyweight champion Ted DiBiase. Blassie feels that, within the near future, Hulk Hogan will be wearing the World Heavyweight Championship belt.

In my opinion, however, his undefeated streak could come to an abrupt halt when, on Jan. 12 at the Spectrum, Hogan faces the dynamic Mexican sensation Tito Santana. If Hogan is to build the type of reputation that Fred Blas-



In this corner

GORILLA MONSOON

sie has in mind for him, he certainly will have to get by the likes of Tito Santana. If this doesn't come about, I'm sure his rating by the World Wrestling Federation would not afford him a title shot.

He seems to possess all the necessary attributes, such as size, speed, agility and extreme power (to date having bench pressed 590 pounds). It only remains to be seen if he possesses the intangibles that can only come from experience in the ring. It certainly will be interesting to follow the career of Hulk Hogan.

* * *

And speaking of the Jan. 12 card

at the Spectrum, promoter Phil Zacko has done a whopdoodle of a job. Look at these matches he'll be presenting:

Jose Estrada vs. Dave O'Hanlon; Johnny Rodz vs. Rene Goulet; Bulldog Brower barking up against Mike Masters; Hussein Arab holding Larry Zbysko hostage; a special attraction match between Tito Santana and Hogan; Swede Hanson taking on yours truly; a special grudge match between Pat Patterson and Capt. Lou Albano; Ken Patera taking on Ivan Putski; and of course, the main event for the world title with

Bob Backlund trying to hold off No. 1 World Wrestling Federation challenger Bob Duncum.

Now to the mailbag:

Dear Gorilla:

Who is responsible for bringing new talent into the WWF — the promoters or the managers? Also, I once read that you would like to go into the promotional end of wrestling after hanging up the boots. My questions are these: Assuming you did become a promoter, would you promote matches in this area and, if so, would you make any significant changes in the federation?

*David Cohen
Philadelphia*

The talent which is brought into the World Wrestling Federation area is done so by promoters Vince McMahon and Phil Zacko. Managers can only suggest to promoters what talent they have available and the promoters decide actually who is to wrestle,

along with the World Wrestling Federation. Countless numbers of wrestlers call these promoters every day, wishing to wrestle in the World Wrestling Federation because this is the mecca of professional wrestling and they know that if they want to make a name for themselves in professional wrestling it can be done here.

I, personally, although in the twilight of my career, am not yet ready to hang up my tights. But when the day comes that I decide to do that I would certainly like to get involved in the promotional end of professional wrestling — probably not so much in booking wrestling talent or putting together wrestling cards as in a public relations approach to try to educate the public as to what professional wrestling is really all about. I feel this has been in some real need over the past years because promoters have not educated the public as well as they could have.

Next Spectrum card could see new champ

As the season comes to an end for the Eagles and coach Dick Vermeil, I think the squad can look back on one heck-of-a season and hold their heads high. I'm already waiting for next year's Super Bowl because I'm sure they'll be there. Congratulations to the squad and to Coach of the Year, Dick Vermeil.

We're just 10 days away from Sunday, Jan. 12. Promoter Phil Zecko is starting off the new year with an outstanding card

for Philadelphia fans.

There could very well be a new champion crowned at the Spectrum when Bob Backlund meets Bob Duncum, a man who has all the ability to beat anyone on any given day.

Other matches of interest on the card are the battle of the powerhouses, Ken Patera vs. Ivan Putski and the special grudge match featuring Pat Patterson and Captain Lou Albano.

Personality profile

This week's personality profile is Dusty Rhodes, the American Dream.

Dusty Rhodes, a plumber's son, started working with his father at age eight. He received formal education at West Texas State University, where he was a football and baseball star.

In 1970, Dusty was introduced to professional wrestling by Wahoo McDaniel and Joe Blanchard, and since then, he has held the following titles: Southern States Heavyweight Champion, U.S. Tag Team Champion, MWA Heavyweight Champion.

As cool a customer as anyone, Rhodes fascinates fans with his vocabulary and lightning-fast Texas accent.

Rhodes has an unbelievable travel schedule because he works for more than one wrestling federation. In 1979, he spent 313 days in and out of airports, probably a record for any professional athlete.

From a humble beginning and now a superstar, Dusty knows both sides of the tracks and can associate well with anyone.



Ivan Putski hopes to have a little bit more success against Ken Patera during the next Spectrum wrestling card than he was having when this picture was taken.



In this corner GORILLA MONSOON

His dream is to win the WWF title and he would love to wrestle Bob Backlund in a scientific match, which he feels would be a real crowd pleaser.

Dear Gorilla,

Is the style of the Japanese sumo wrestlers similar to the Americans' catch-as-catch-can style? How do wrestlers who accept challenges from sumo wrestlers fare?

Larry Pietrafesa
Philadelphia

To the best of my knowledge, American wrestlers have never engaged in matches with Japanese sumo wrestlers, although numerous challenges have been issued by the Americans.

Sumo wrestling is a kind of religion and a very closed affair. Sumo wrestlers are the most conditioned athletes in the world, but make the best of balance and speed. The average sumo wrestling match lasts between 12 and 14 seconds.

Dear Gorilla,

Does Muhammad Ali still have a grudge against you after you humiliated him on national television several years ago?

Mike Mathis
Philadelphia

I'm sure Ali is still not too happy about our confronta-

tion on TV that time. I have a video tape of it he's still dying to get his hands on. Muhammad always likes publicity, but the kind he got that day at the Philadelphia Arena was not to his satisfaction.

Dear Gorilla,

I would like to know if a wrestler is fined if he physically attacks Vince McMahon during an interview or assaults the ring announcer.

Sandi Kerr
Stowe, Pa.

Any wrestler who touches the ring announcer or a broadcaster of a member of the state athletic commission is subject to fine and many have been passed out. Some wrestlers don't know when to quit.

Top of page:
Philadelphia,
Pennsylvania
column from
paper of
1/2/80

Duncum may win title here

We are just a few days away from Saturday's big wrestling card at the Spectrum and it seems that the majority of wrestling fans are really anxious to see the special grudge match between Captain Lou Albano and Pat Patterson.

In my personal opinion, though, the greatest match of the evening will be the title match for I feel that Bobby Duncum certainly has the greatest chance of anyone of taking the title away from Bob Backlund.

It would be really nice for Philadelphia wrestling fans to get a title change in the Spectrum. To the best of my recollection the only title change ever to take place in Philadelphia was at the old Philadelphia Arena when Stan Stasiak defeated then-champion Pedro Morales.

Saturday's other bouts, incidentally, will feature yours truly entering the ring against the always rough-and-ready Swede Hanson.

Meet Dominic DeNucci

This week's personality profile is Dominic DeNucci, born in Campogasso, Italy.

Dominic trained in amateur wrestling from the age of eight, but, coming from a big family, DeNucci had to go to work early trying to raise money to relocate his family in Montreal, Canada. After many hardships the family finally did make the transition to Canada where Dominic was offered a good job as an upholsterer — a job which enabled him to send money to Italy in hopes of bringing his entire family to Canada.

Dominic continued his wrestling training at night and, in 1965, was convinced by one of Canada's top wrestlers, Yvan Robbert, to turn to professional wrestling as a means to supplement his income. After only two years Dominic was a headliner, and since then has traveled all over the world with a reputation of being one of wrestling's greats.

Dominic currently makes his home in Pittsburgh where he lives with his wife and daughter. Since being a professional DeNucci has held four outstanding wrestling titles, the latest being the world tag team champion with partner Dino

Wednesday, Jan. 9, 1980 /

In this corner

GORILLA MONSOON



Now to the mailbag:

Dear Mr. Monsoon:

Are you married? My mom says you aren't but I think you are 'cause you're a big hunk of man. Do you know why the big matches aren't on national TV?

Your biggest fan,
Maryann Gallagher
Philadelphia

I am extremely married. I have three children; a daughter Sharon, 20, a son Joseph, 17 and a daughter Valerie, 14. My wife's name is Maureen.

I don't know why wrestling is not nationally syndicated. I would imagine the main reason is that a particular television station or a particular number of wrestlers could no way service the entire country, the time element would be too great a factor.

Dear Gorilla:

Where are the Executioners, Tony Garea, Dean Ho, Killer Kowalski, and the traitors I hope never come back - Spiros Arion, Victor Rivera, and my favorite Wrestler El Olympico?

Bobby Snyder
Philadelphia

The Executioners have split up as a team. One is working in North Carolina and the other, to be best of my knowledge, has retired from pro wrestling and is now with an insurance company. Dean Ho is currently working in Hawaii and doing quite well. Tony Garea was in Madison Square Garden right before the holidays and has returned to New Zealand where he is engaged in wrestling and is currently the New Zealand heavyweight champion. Killer Kowalski is in Stoneham, Mass. where he is an electrical engineer and has completely retired from professional wrestling. Spiros Arion is wrestling in South Africa while making his home in Greece. Victor Rivera is a big star on the West Coast working for Mike LeBell in

the Los Angeles area. El Olympico is retired from professional wrestling and owns a bar and restaurant in Northeast Philadelphia. He occasionally comes around to renew old acquaintances.

Duncum to get rematch

Anyone who was not among the sellout crowd at the Spectrum last Saturday missed one of the greatest nights in pro wrestling history.

In the feature match WWF champion Bob Backlund was beaten by Bob Duncum, but, because of the current rule interpretation, Backlund did not lose his title. The rule is that a title can only change hands on a pin or submission. Referee Dick Woerle stopped the match after 17:35 because of a severe cut over Backlund's eye and awarded the match to Duncum.

Promoter Phil Zacko, upon seeing the outcome, rushed to Backlund's dressing room and even as the doctor was stitching Bob's wound, Zacko got his signature on a contract for a return match to be held at the Spectrum Saturday, Feb. 9.

Also on the Feb. 9 card the Wild Samoans will face Tito Santana and yours truly; the very impressive Hulk Hogan will meet Dominic DeNucci; and, returning after a lengthy absence, four of the world's best midget wrestlers will compete in an Australian tag team match.

* * *

This week's personality profile is Captain Lou Albano, the manager of some of the more infamous wrestlers in the ring today. The Captain was an active wrestler for 20 years before becoming a manager. During his

career Albano held the World Tag Team championship with partner Tony Altomare and the Midwestern Tag Team title for three consecutive years.

Since retiring from the ring Albano has managed 29 men. Among the most famous — or infamous — was Ivan Koloff, the man who first stripped Sammartino of his title. Also in Albano's stable at one time was the world's strongest man and Olympic star Ken Patera.

Captain Lou is the only man in pro wrestling history to have managed eight world tag team championship teams. As a youth Albano was a two-time Catholic All-America in football and received a scholarship to the University of Tennessee where he was an outstanding right guard.

The Captain's latest find are the unbelievable Wild Samoans. Coming from American Samoa, the two brothers Aissa and Sica both are 6-1 and have a combined weight of 605 pounds. The Samoans have an ancestry of cannibalism and their diet today consists of plenty of raw meat, fish and chicken. The Captain admits he has a very difficult time controlling this pair, but

In this corner

GORILLA MONSOON



feels that the time is well spent because he knows in the near future they will become the world champions.

The Captain has devoted his entire life to professional wrestling, spending most of his time traveling the world seeking out new talent. Many people feel that Captain Lou Albano is not playing with a full deck, however over the years he has proven to the wrestling world that he is the manager of champions. And if the Samoans don't make a meal out of him he'll be around for a long time.

Now to the mailbag:

Dear Gorilla:

I look forward every Wednesday for your column in the Journal, however, I feel after last week's column you owe us Philadelphia fans an apology.

I am at a loss to see how you feel it would really be nice to

have a title change in Philadelphia when it would go to the likes of (Bob) Duncum and Albano.

*Richard D. Stauffer
Lebanon, Pa.*

I feel that a professional wrestling title could change hands on any given night. Bob Duncum is an outstanding wrestler regardless of who manages him and he has all the credentials to prove it. I feel it would be a feather in the cap of the Philadelphia Spectrum not only to have a match of this magnitude, but also to see a title change.

I am not a friend of Bob Duncum or Lou Albano. I was merely expressing my opinion as to the outcome of that particular match.

Dear Gorilla:

Will Billy Whitewolf ever wrestle again? Who do you think will

be the next WWF champion? I Chief Jay Strongbow still wrestling in the WWF?

*Kevin Jackson
Newark, Del.*

Billy Whitewolf, after being seriously injured several years ago at the hands of Ken Patera, was forced to retire from professional wrestling. However, as with most professional wrestlers, he is a well educated individual and is currently teaching school in Hawaii.

I feel that there are several men in the WWF with the ability to strip Backlund of his title, including Bob Duncum, Ken Patera and Hulk Hogan.

Currently Chief Jay Strongbow is wrestling in the Midwest and is no longer fulfilling any bookings in the WWF.

GORILLA AGAINST ALI: THE REAL STORY

I have received many letters asking about the unscheduled bout between myself and Muhammad Ali which took place Jan. 1, 1976. The setting was the old Philadelphia Arena where we were doing our regular wrestling tapings before a live audience.

Without any prior notice Ali arrived on the scene with an entourage of about 40 and seated himself at ringside. I found out later that Ali had signed a contract to meet Japanese wrestling star Antonio Anoki at a future date, and, hearing that pro wrestling was on at the Arena that night, he decided to take a look at what he had gotten himself involved in.

'I can take you'

I was wrestling Baron Scichuna and when Scichuna was counted out in the ring, Ali jumped from his seat screaming, "I can take you," and pointing at me.

My reply was "You can take me to lunch or dinner," and with this, Ali stepped to the waist and entered the ring. Once inside he took his shoes off and started dancing around. I really didn't know exactly what Ali had in mind but he certainly wasn't going to make a reputation over me on national television.

He continued dancing around and began throwing jabs at me, mostly from a safe distance. As he danced around he came closer and closer, constantly throwing punches. When he got close enough I grabbed him up in an airplane spin, gave him a good ride and threw him to the canvas. He was dizzy from the spin and stunned from hitting the canvas, to which he was not accustomed. Before this could go any further six or eight of his men jumped into the ring and dragged him out and I haven't seen him again to this day.

* * *

There will be blood in the eyes of both Bob Duncan and Bob Backlund when the two tangle at the Spectrum Feb. 9 in a championship bout of the World Wrestling Federation.

If you'll remember, Duncan beat Backlund in a match at the Spectrum Jan. 12, but the title didn't change hands since referee Dick Woehrle stopped the fight because Backlund was bleeding excessively.

Backlund admits that Woehrle's decision was correct, but also knows that the record books won't explain the manner in which he lost the bout — only that he lost. He'll be

coming out with a different attitude toward the challenger and about 10 times more determination to win.

DUNCUM has power

Duncum, on the other hand, knows for sure now that he has the power and technique necessary to defeat the champion. That sweet taste of victory will still be on his lips when he meets Backlund Feb. 9.

Other outstanding bouts on the card are Lou Albano's Wild Samoa facing yours truly and the sensational Tito Santana. I know this won't be any night off for me, but with a partner like Santana I feel very comfortable. Also, knowing the support that will be given us by the fans could make a difference in this bout.

Now to the mailbag.

Dear Gorilla:

How come the wrestlers' managers don't attend the matches at the Spectrum? Is there a rule barring Albano, Blasie and the Wiz from major matches?

How big is the "squared circle"? What is the floor made of? Is it padded to protect the wrestlers?

Is your nickname the Jersey Giant?

Jose Cruz
Flourtown

Managers are usually at the Spectrum. Lou Albano films every match that his personnel is involved in and he does this under many disguises. Managers are definitely not barred from any arena, although many times their busy schedules do not allow them to make all the major clubs.

The wrestling ring is constructed of steel, primarily, covered with four-by-eight sheets of one inch plywood. A piece of carpeting covers the plywood to keep the wood from splintering and a canvas covers everything. Most wrestling rings are 20-foot square, however there are some 18-footers.

Yes, my nickname is the Jersey Giant.

Dear Gorilla:

I am interested in becoming a woman wrestler. Can you give me an address to write to for more info? Are there any women wrestlers in the WWF? How much money does a wrestler make per match?

"Joe" Edwards
Philadelphia

Any inquiries should be written to Capital Wrestling Corp., 1625 Vermont Ave., N.W., Washington,



In this corner
GORILLA MONSOON



MUHAMMAD ALI

D.C. 20005. The WWF employs many female wrestlers throughout the year, their income being based on gross receipts. I would say the average girl wrestler earns between \$40,000 and \$60,000 a year.

RILLA MONSON

SAC 9
FEB.



News Photo/THOMAS OLEARY

GORILLA MONSOON speaks at SAC yesterday afternoon

Is it for real?

THE TEMPLE UNIVERSITY NEWS (TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 5, 1980)

Gorilla Monsoon says 'Yes!'

By PAUL FISHBEIN
Assistant Arts Editor

Before the opening bell rings, "Handsome" Jim Valiant attacks his six-and-a-half foot 401-pound adversary, pummeling him with a series of kicks and punches that would leave an ordinary man half dead. But this is no ordinary man: this is Gorilla Monsoon.

The behemoth responds with his own barrage of human artillery, and one near-fatal judo chop to the throat sends gobs of spit into the lap of a graying old woman in the fourth row. Yet she doesn't mind; Gorilla is about to pin the villainous Valiant, and once again, Good Will outlasts Evil.

Such is the excitement for which we say script(i) of professional wrestling.

"If anyone has the nerve to ask me if wrestling's real, let them pick up my doctor bills for a year," Gorilla Monsoon challenged an audience of more than 200 Temple students yesterday.

"When I step up into the ring, I don't wanna get hurt," he said. "I've had all of my ribs broken twice. I've had my shoulder separated. I've broken fingers, arms, had countless concussions..."

The list goes on and on. Nobody can ever get a straight answer to whether pro wrestling is legitimate or phony.

But Monsoon, at 42, is a survivor of ring wars for 24 years. Whether his chosen profession can be taken seriously or not does not really explain the scars on his head and face.

"Pro wrestling leads men in many directions," admitted Monsoon. "But we're self-employed, private contractors with no union and no help."

According to Monsoon, the name of the wrestling game is "money." The winner of a match supposedly receives 70 percent of the purse, while the loser grabs the rest. "And guys do weird things for money," he said.

Turned pro in '59

A graduate of Ithaca University in upstate New York, Monsoon went through the ranks of amateur wrestling and turned professional in 1959. "I didn't know half as much about wrestling as I thought I did," he lamented. "So I hired Wild Red Berry to manage me and to show me all the short cuts and I did exactly as he told me. That's why I had the reputation of being a villain."

"But I was getting a little bit tired of being kinged, having things thrown at me, having fans corner me outside the arena, having my car — not smashed — but demolished, having my kids come home from school saying the other kids called their father a creep. I figured that I'd better play it straight."

Many psychologists, doctors and fans all agree that pro wrestling can be a form of release for the frustrated person, the Gorilla said.

"I know a woman once that got so mad at a match, that she blew her entire television set away. That way she shouldn't see the final result," Monsoon quipped.

Monsoon does admit that there is plenty of showmanship in professional wrestling.

"In all sports, there is showmanship," he said. "People want to be entertained. You've got your bleached blondes, extravagant robes, George the Animal, Steel-type characters, enraged animals. A good pro can take a crowd of 19,000 and make them stand up, sit down, laugh, cry and throw things."

Yet the average person wonders how men can be hit with chairs and butter, have their fate stepped on, and have their heads thrown into a steel ringpost and still continue to do battle.

"Well I'll admit that wrestling has to be cleaned up a bit to become a real spectator/family sport," Monsoon said.

During yesterday's speech, fans gave Monsoon several large ovations while the Gorilla related many stories and some well-known facts. He demonstrated some wrestling maneuvers on WCAU television's Sheila Allen and a member of Temple's wrestling fan club.

Holds really hurt*

"Some of these holds really hurt," smiled Allen. Spectators yesterday penetrated Monsoon's defense with the piercing questions that wrestlers usually receive.

"There isn't a question you can ask that I won't answer," Monsoon remarked, "either verbally or physically."

One fan, Temple employee Walt Wolansky, asked why "good guys don't usually wrestle other heroes and why villains don't battle their own hideous kind." Monsoon simply said that those type of matches don't draw well.

Another fan asked about wrestling's lack of promotion and media coverage.

"The one complaint I have with the promoters in the 25 or so different wrestling territories," Monsoon said, "is that they don't spend enough money on educating wrestling fans what the sport is really all about," Monsoon said.

"Those wrestling magazines you can buy are totally false and are a detriment to the sport."

Therefore, Monsoon has taken some of the promotional aspect of wrestling into his own gigantic hands. Every Wednesday, his column appears in the *Philadelphia Journal*. He has appeared on numerous television programs, including Tom Snyder's *Tomorrow Show* and *Wide World of Sports* (He had a small role in with Muhammad Ali a few years prior to Ali's now famous debacle of a match versus Japanese wrestling champion Antonio Inoki).

But, finally, the only question people really wanted answered left them, as usual, disappointed.

"It's the real thing," says Gorilla Monsoon. "I've never laid down for anyone. We as wrestlers, have no control over the rules and referees. We're just in it for the money. The results to my knowledge, are never pre-determined."

PeoplePaper

PEOPLE

Philadelphia,
Pennsylvania

He's suffered broken ribs and shoulders, but Robert Marella — better known as Gorilla Monsoon — says, "I get paid to do what I love."

The Mild-Mannered Bruiser From Jersey

By LEWIS BEALE

When Robert Marella leaves his comfortably pointed Willingboro, N.J. home and heads off to work, he undergoes a near-miraculous transformation. Loving father of three teenagers, active in several charities, a soft-spoken, intelligent man who seems to be the epitome of middle class respectability, Marella fits into a community like a hand in a well-tailored glove.

At 6'6" and 400 pounds, however, Marella is no means average. Far from being a hulking, overweight slob, though, he is solid as a concrete block, and for good reason. Nearly a hundred nights per year, in sports arenas from New York City to Tokyo, Robert Marella tips down to blackights and assumes the entity of Gorilla Monsoon, professional wrestler.

"I GET PAID to do what I love," says the articulate athlete, in town yesterday to talk to the Wrestling Club of Temple University. "And I like to give these talks to help improve the image of the sport," he adds, somewhat unconvincingly, for the 150 or so people who have come out to hear him speak have bestowed on him the kind of adulation and wild applause served for a superstar.

Marella is a major drawing card in a sport many people feel is more entertainment than athletics. Pro wrestling is all too often stereotyped by its "hero vs. villain" matchups (Marella is a hero), outrageous crowds, flashy costumes and showmanlike acrobatics. Some people think that the matches have pre-determined winners and losers, and that any injuries sustained are totally fake.

"Well," says Marella, responding to criticisms he's heard many times before, "I tell people who ask if it's for real, just pay my medical bills. I've had my ribs broken several times while wrestling, in addition to both my shoulders, and I have scars on my face which

have yet to heal. Believe me, those weren't fake injuries."

"AS FAR AS showmanship, if there weren't any, the arenas would be empty. Watching Greco-Roman wrestling (the kind seen in Olympic competition) is about as exciting as watching grass grow. Showmanship is necessary, but if you want to survive once you're in that ring, you better pay attention to who you're in there with. Since wrestling purses are usually split so that the winner gets 70 percent, with the loser getting the rest, you can be sure that people aren't in that ring for the glory, but to win money to support their families."

Unlike some members of his profession, Marella has no financial problems. After graduating from St. Olaf College with a degree in physiotherapy and a brief stint as a teacher, Marella turned pro in 1960. He was a star on the circuit almost from the beginning.

Now considered one of the top ten names in the sport, he regularly earns more than \$100,000 per year, and is one of the few wrestlers who can demand, and get, a percentage of the gate.

"THAT'S THE name of pro wrestling: money," he says. "When I step out there, I don't wanna get hurt, because that affects my income. We are all self-employed independent contractors booked by local promoters. If you're in, say, New Mexico, and you get hurt, the promoter will say 'gee, I'm sorry you're hurt, goodbyes.' It's your problem, your life, your pay."

A wrestler since the age of 8, Marella, now 42, originally got into the sport because it paid a lot more than what he was making as a science teacher. In his years in the business, he's moved from villain to hero, mourned the death of a beloved manager and heard his profession slandered. A candid man, Marella is the first to admit pro wrestling isn't perfect, but he tends to blame some fans, some referees, and some state athletic commissions.



Robert Marella alias Gorilla

"Bad fans are found in every sport," he notes, as he responds to a frequently voiced criticism. "Any time you pit good against evil, you tend to bring out that sadistic tendency. We just have to get people who know proper crowd control."

"Actually, there are worse problems in the sport. Some state athletic commissions have referees in the ring who don't belong there. And the horrible wrestling magazines you see on the newsstands are a real detriment to the sport; they could be sued for libel everyday."

Marella, who will be wrestling at the Spectrum this Saturday at 8:30 p.m., also thinks the sport could be cleaned up for kids — "there's no place in athletics for things like biting," he says — but overall he's happy with the image of pro wrestling.

"We fill up arenas all over the country," he says happily, "and I think that if kids can look up to a good guy wrestler like Bruno Sammartino or Bob Backlund as a hero, well, that's good. Wrestling has all sorts of facets."

Travis will be back

I just want to take a short moment to express the pleasure I had Monday afternoon when I addressed the pro wrestling club of Temple University. It certainly was a gratifying experience to see so many well-educated wrestling fans. To the Temple Club, I'd like to say, keep up the good work.

Now to the mailbag:

Dear Gorilla:

What ever happened to WWF Rookie of the Year Steve Travis? Who did Tasumi Fujinami defeat for the light-heavyweight title?

What is the longest and shortest records for holding the WWF tag team title and which teams did it?

Simon Gvozdenovich
Hilltop, N.J.

Steve Travis is currently wrestling in Florida and Georgia and I'm sure he'll be makin his way back to the World Wrestling Federation shortly.

Tasumi Fujinami first won the light-heavyweight title in Kansas City, Mo., from Danny Hodge.

The shortest reign of tag team titleists, to the best of my knowledge, would have been Chief Jay Strongbow and Billy Whitewolf, due to an injury which caused the team to forfeit their belts. The longest reigning tag team, to the best of my recollection, were probably the Valiant Brothers, John and Jim, who held the belts for at



HUSSEIN ARAB

...no problems

least two years.

Dear Gorilla:

Do you think that Pat Patterson is turning good? Do you think the Samoans can be beaten? If so who do you think could beat them or would give them a good match?

Some of my friends say wrestling is false. Are some of the matches planned for a certain person to win? If so, why?

David Sweigart
Philadelphia

Pat Patterson is definitely turning good, and I think most of it's due to the fact that Pat no longer wishes to have the image of a rule breaker because so many letters were received by his family that are derogatory about him.

The Samoans are certainly one of the most outrageous teams to come along in a long time and they will certainly be tested Saturday night at the Spectrum when they meet the very formidable team of yours truly and Tito Santana.

There are no predetermined winners in professional wrestling.

Dear Mr. Monsoon:

In what way has the current world situation affected the attitudes of wrestlers, promoters and fans toward grapplers from antagonistic countries? For example, Russia's Ivan Koloff and Iran's Great Hussein Arab.

Daniel Abecassis
Philadelphia

I'm sure the world situation does have an effect on wrestlers, especially those originating from countries that are

In this corner

GORILLA MONSOON



currently in the news. However, these wrestlers have all been in the United States for a long time and most of them are green card holders. And, although their origin may be from a foreign country, they are considered United States citizens. I don't feel that politics and athletics should ever be mixed, as the only one who really suffers is the athlete.

Dear Gorilla:

Will you please tell me where Superstar Billy Graham, Bobo Brazil, Stan Hanson and the Yukon Lumberjacks are? And who can benchpress more weight, Superstar Billy Graham, Hulk Hogan, Tony Atlas or Bob Backlund?

Tony Gargano
Philadelphia

Superstar Billy Graham is currently semi-retired in his home in Arizona, wrestling approximately once a month and training for some bodybuilding physique contests. Bobo Brazil is currently in the Orient and when in the

United States usually wrestles out of the Detroit area. Stan Hanson is currently wrestling in the Carolinas, and, if I'm not mistaken, is the Southern States heavyweight champion at the present time. The Yukon Lumberjacks, to the best of my knowledge, have split up as a team, one of them currently working in Montreal and the other is not to be found in wrestling today.

I would have to say that Bob Backlund would be the man to push the most iron on the bench press, however, the individual who can out-push them all is someone you didn't even mention: Olympic strongman Ken Patera.

To sum up, we're only a few short days away from the wrestling spectacular slated for Saturday at the Spectrum. The wrestling world is waiting for the outcome of the return match between Bob Backlund and Bob Duncum for the WWF heavyweight crown.

Below: Philadelphia, Pennsylvania weekly column

Bruno's rage

Larry Zbysko turns into an enemy

The Spectrum will host a blockbuster match March 1 when Larry Zbysko goes up against his former trainer and close friend Bruno Sammartino.

The wrestling world has been buzzing these past weeks over the recent incident which took place between Zbysko and Sammartino — an incident which makes the match the hottest bout in Philadelphia in the past decade. Let me bring you up to date on what has transpired.

Everyone knows that Larry Zbysko is the only man ever personally trained by Bruno, and this was done at Larry's request. Bruno was very fond of Larry and spent many hours training and teaching him and, in fact, got him his start in pro-wrestling, which is a feat in itself.

Larry has done extremely well for himself over the years and has been a co-holder of the World Tag Team title with partner Tony Garea. I can remember the night they won the belts when Larry, with tears of joy in his eyes, hugged Bruno and said "I owe it all to you."

TV challenge

Several weeks ago Larry Zbysko, while being interviewed, shocked the wrestling world by saying that at this point in time he could no longer survive in the shadow of Bruno Sammartino, that wrestling fans were not seeing him as Larry Zbysko but as the protege of Bruno Sammartino. Larry went on to say, "The only way for me to prove my worth is to wrestle Bruno on national television so the entire world can see how good I really am."

Bruno flatly refused, stating it would be like wrestling his brother. A week went by and Larry persisted, saying he would never enter the squared circle again until he met Sammartino. Bruno, not wanting Larry's career to end, accepted the match with the following conditions: he would not try in any way to defeat Larry, merely counter his moves. Larry agreed, and the rest is history.

Hit with chair

Three weeks ago the two met in Allentown. Zbysko, enraged at not being able to defeat Sammartino, viciously attacked his former friend and trainer with a chair. When the smoke had cleared Sammartino needed 10 stitches to close a severe head wound. As each stitch was placed, the love and respect for young Larry was drained from Sammartino until all that was left was disgust and hatred. Any-



In this corner

GORILLA MONSOON

one can feel hatred towards an enemy, but to be betrayed by someone who has been in your home, at your table and loved like a brother, conjures up more than hatred and I'm sure Bruno feels this way about Larry.

No one knows how much pain Bruno is carrying over this betrayal, but as a close personal friend of Bruno's I can honestly say it is unbearable. I would not like to be in Zbysko's shoes on March 1 in the Spectrum.

Also on the March 1 card: Samoan No. 1 will meet Bob Backlund; Ken Patera will face Dominic DeNucci; and four girls will meet in an Australian tag team match.

Now to the mailing:

Dear Mr. Monsoon:

My favorite ring announcer for pro-wrestling was Buddy Wagner. What ever happened to Mr. Wagner? Also, what country is the Grand Wizard from?

Gabe Distilowski
Gibbstown, N.J.

Buddy Wagner passed away rather suddenly about five years ago. He surely was missed not only by the wrestling world but the world in general as he was an outstanding individual who always donated something to whatever he came in contact with.

The Grand Wizard, to the dismay of many, is from the good old USA. I believe his hometown is Detroit.

Pet's switch

Dear Gorilla:

Having been in a similar situation, you can probably relate to Pat Patterson's recent transition from rulebreaker to fan favorite. Was the transition a rough one? How do you think Pat is handling it? Would you have any reservations in teaming with him?

Bob Langnas
Philadelphia

I feel that Pat Patterson has made the transition very well and the reason is that Pat was getting many letters sent to his family which were derogatory about him and no one likes to be in trouble at home. Pat Patterson is an outstanding wrestler and should be ever asked personally to be a partner of his in a match, I would not hesitate for one minute. He has always been a credit to pro-

fessional wrestling and I'm sure he will continue to be so.

Where's Whitewolf?

Dear Gorilla:
Will Billy Whitewolf ever be back? I heard he was wrestling somewhere but I forgot where. Have you ever been hospitalized due to a wrestling match?

Also, I was told that Andre the Giant appeared on two TV shows (BJ and the Bear and the Six Million Dollar Man). Could you tell me if this is true? Have any other wrestlers ever acted on TV or in movies?

Joe Wolf
Dauphin, Pa.

Billy Whitewolf, to the best of my knowledge, is no longer wrestling, due to a severe injury to the neck and is currently teach-

ing school in Honolulu. I have been hospitalized too many times in professional wrestling than I care to remember. I would say, off the top of my head, probably two dozen times, ranging elsewhere from concussions to severe lacerations to broken bones.

Andre the Giant did appear on the two shows you mentioned. Many wrestlers have done bit parts in quite a few television programs, including the Jackie Gleason Show, You Bet Your Life with Groucho Marx, the Tom Snyder Show and a lot of other talk shows. A lot of wrestlers have also had movie parts, the most famous being Milmeisters who has appeared in about 14 full-length movies made in Mexico and distributed in the United States by Columbia Pictures.

Zbysko killed his credibility

The letters have been piling up, so I'll just take this opportunity to answer some of the questions from the faithful wrestling fans.

Dear Gorilla:

I would just like to say how great your column is. It is, without a doubt, the best in the Journal. I look forward to reading it every Wednesday. It's about time a newspaper had a feature on pro wrestling. Keep up the good work.

Now, about my question. What do you think of the recent turn of Larry Zbysko? Do you think he has a better chance of winning the belt from Backlund than he did before? I sure hope someone gets it from Houchy soon.

Janelle Scherbik

Trenton, N.J.

Within this past week I had the opportunity to question Larry about the incident and Larry stated that he felt humiliated by Sammartino in the ring because Bruno did not give Larry a chance to break the holds once they were applied to him. However, this didn't carry too much weight with me because it was understood before the match took place that Bruno would not try to defeat Larry.

Larry further stated that it was an accident which caused him to strike Sammartino with a chair, being that he had lost his cool and composure. I stated to Larry that it is a matter of record that he struck Bruno three consecutive times. Larry's reply was "no comment".

I feel that Larry has completely destroyed his credibility as a professional and this incident will definitely terminate his career within the next year. I don't personally believe that Larry Zbysko will ever get a shot at Backlund's title. There are too many men, including Sammartino, who are currently anxious to get their hands on Larry Zbysko. Bruno, over the years, has earned the respect and admiration of everyone he has come in contact with. Even after Larry leaves this area there will be men gunning for him wherever he goes.

Dear Mr. Monsoon:

I just have two questions to ask. Why is Philadelphia always a week behind in the TV tapes? Channel 9 in New York is always up to date.

Second question is when a wrestler gets hit in the head with a chair why does he bleed from the forehead like the recent match with Bruno and Larry. Larry hit Bruno over the head and Bruno yet bleeding from his forehead.

Betty McCullum

Philadelphia

I'm not sure who coordinates the syndication of the wres-

In this corner

GORILLA MONSOON



tling tapes, however obviously New York is No. 1 on the marketing sheets and Philadelphia and a lot of other markets are No. 2. Tapes are made several weeks weeks in advance so the oldest they could be is two weeks old. Anyone getting the New York stations certainly would be up to date, so I don't see where it's a problem; if you don't see it the first time around you certainly would see it the following week.

Bruno Sammartino was not only cut on the forehead, but the cuts started on the top of his head causing blood to run down almost to his eyebrow. This required 10 stitches to close. If you will watch this week you will see Pat Patterson sporting a scar right across the top of his head that also required 10 stitches to close. I carry scars all over my body so I really think, from a layman's standpoint, you don't know what you're talking about.

Dear Gorilla:

I am an avid wrestling fan and I have some puzzling and curious questions for you because everybody knows you're one of the greatest wrestlers of all time. No. 1 I want to know how you and other wrestlers like Crusher Blackwell stay in such great shape and are so quick for your size in the ring. No. 2, I know you don't like Lou Albano very well, but does he still keep himself in good shape even though he doesn't wrestle anymore?

If this

Upper Darby

I cannot speak for Crusher Blackwell because I have never been on the road with him or with him when he is training, but at my body weight I certainly have to do quite a bit to stay in wrestling condition. I do that by playing a great deal of racquetball, swimming and jogging. The best way to stay in shape for wrestling is actually to wrestle.

Albano, surprisingly, is in pretty fair shape for someone who no longer frequents the ring. I believe he does a lot of free exercise and calisthenics, however I'm sure when he does enter the ring in a match he's glad when it's over.

* * *

Just a reminder that wrestling returns to the Spectrum March 1, with probably the biggest bout in Philadelphia history when former

friends turned mortal enemies Larry Zbysko and Bruno Sammartino go at it and Samoa No. 1 challenges Bob Backlund for his title.

In This Corner

Gorilla Monsoon



Bruno wants Zbysko's blood

The sparks will be flying at the Spectrum Saturday when the long-awaited grudge match between Larry Zbysko and his former tutor and friend Bruno Sammartino takes place. The entire wrestling world is anxiously waiting for Sammartino and Zbysko to enter the squared circle.

Also on Saturday's Spectrum card, Bob Backlund will defend his world title against the unpredictable Samson No. 1 and, after a lengthy absence, the four girl wrestlers will compete in an Australian Tag Team match.

I would advise all my loyal wrestling fans who want to see this card at the Spectrum Saturday to get your tickets immediately or you will be among the many unhappy souls who will not be able to get into the Spectrum.

Now, into the mailbag.

Who's after Zbysko?

Dear Gorilla:

I have a few questions for you. First, in your column you stated that many people were shooting for Larry Zbysko. Could you list some of them aside from Bruno?

Second, why don't they match Hulk Hogan with some super-heavyweights like yourself, Andre, etc.

Finally, how did the match between Bob Backlund and Ken Paters turn out at Madison Square Garden this month?

David Evans
Brookline, Pa.

There are many, many of Bruno's friends, including myself, who would like to get their hands on Zbysko. Among them are Dominic DeNucci, Bob Backlund, Pat Patterson, Cowboy Bill Watts, Mickey Bockwinkle, and others too numerous to mention.

Hulk Hogan to date has not met the real good super-heavyweights, however his schedule is getting tougher all the time and I'm sure that within the near future he will be wrestling the likes of Tito Santa, yours truly and Andre the Giant. His manager, Fred Glassie, is very carefully screening his opponents.

The match between Backlund and Paters terminated in a disqualification of Paters.

Is it TV hype?

Mr. Gorilla Monsoon:

Is Larry Zbysko being paid a lot of money to say and act the way he is to Bruno Sammartino? Are the promoters turning Larry into a bad guy to keep the people and television viewers interested in wrestling? Are Bruno and Larry still friends through all this?

Ruth Sutcliffe
Philadelphia

How could be a very naive individual to believe that Zbysko and Bruno Sammartino are still friends at this time. The legitimate failing out between Zbysko and Sammartino inevitably will terminate Larry Zbysko's career as a professional wrestler. Right now promoters will definitely take advantage of this situation as it is tremendous busi-



BRUNO SAMMARTINO

...can't wait to get his hands on Larry Zbysko Saturday night at the Spectrum

office, but in the weeks and months to come Larry Zbysko's name will fade with each passing day. Unfortunately it seems that Larry made a tremendous mistake which will cost him not only a great deal of money but the many friends he has made over the past seven or eight years he has given to professional wrestling. Professional wrestling has been drawing tremendous crowds all over the country long before the Zbysko-Sammartino incident took place, so that certainly didn't stimulate the wrestling business.

Book review

Dear Gorilla:

What is your opinion of the book *The Main Event* by Roberta Morgan? I personally liked it but felt it was too centered around the WWF.

Jason Waksman
Philadelphia

I agree with your opinion about the book. I felt it was a good book and that she spent a great deal of time on the East Coast, consequently most of the book is comprised of WWF contenders. I felt she might have gone more in depth into the personal lives of some of the wrestlers as many of them are unique and have tremendous interests other than professional wrestling. Some of the photographs were very well done and in general the book put together quite well.

NOTE: Due to the heavy volume of mail, it is requested that letter writers ask only one question. Please sign all letters and include addresses. Those letters which do not include addresses or are not legible will not be answered.

In this corner

GORILLA MONSOON



BRUNO LOST CONTROL

The blood lust that Bruno Sammartino feels for his former pupil Larry Zbysko was not lessened in any way by Saturday's bout at the Spectrum. If anything, the hatred the teacher feels for his former pupil has been intensified.

In a controversial decision Zbysko was awarded a decision over Bruno in that bout. From my vantage point, Bruno completely dominated Zbysko for over 15 minutes, outmaneuvering, overpowering and outclassing his opponent. Once again, out of pure frustration, Zbysko struck Bruno with everything but the kitchen sink and still could not defeat the master.

Bruno, enraged at Zbysko's tactics, lost his composure and began a vicious attack on Larry. When referee Dick Woehrle tried to control him, Bruno knocked Woehrle completely across the ring and he became semi-conscious. The Pennsylvania Athletic Commission called for the bell but that didn't stop the enraged Sammartino. Pat Patterson, Dominic DeNucci and I had to rush into the ring to subdue the Living Legend.

When Zbysko was finally escorted from the ring, the decision was given that Sammartino had been disqualified, because, according to State Athletic Commission rules, striking an official constitutes an automatic disqualification.

BRUNO upset

Later, in the dressing room, Bruno was very upset and disgusted.

He was disgusted because he lost his temper and inadvertently struck the referee, to whom he had already apologized. But mostly he was upset because the record books will merely state that on March 1, 1980 at the Spectrum, Larry Zbysko defeated Bruno Sammartino.

Before Bruno left the Spectrum Saturday he signed an open contract with promoter Phil Zacko for a return match, slated for Saturday, April 12, with the following stipulations: there would be no disqualification and no count-outs.

The co-feature, April 12, will be a real test for WWF champion Bob Backlund who will have to face the giant Hulk Hogan.

Now to the mailbag.

Name game

Dear Mr. Monsoon:

Why do you use the name Gorilla Monsoon when your real name is Gino Marella? What made you change from a bad guy to a good guy? Why doesn't the Spectrum ever get any international stars like Mil Mascaras, Harley Race, Ric Flair and so on, like Madison Square Garden gets?

Naomi Levine
Levittown, Pa.

The name Gorilla Monsoon was given to me by promoter Vince McMahon many years ago. Incidentally, you are incorrect in assuming my name is Gino. My name is Bob, so that puts me one up on you.

For many years I was under the tutelage of the famous Wild Red Berry and after his passing I began doing my own booking and decided to wrestle the style of wrestling that I was most interested in.

The wrestling stars that you mentioned will certainly, at one time or another, appear at the Spectrum.

Where's Tony?

Dear Gorilla:

Will Tony Garea come back to the WWF now that long-time tag team partner and friend Larry Zbysko has become a rulebreaker? Are they still friends, and, if not, will they wrestle?

Bill Mettinger
Philadelphia

I believe that Tony Garea is scheduled to return to the World Wrestling federation in 1980 and he will do so regardless of the standards of Larry Zbysko, being that Tony Garea is an outstanding wrestler and is in great demand by reason of his own abilities. Tony is currently out of the country, so I don't know what his feelings are about the transition that Zbysko has made. I'm sure he'd be very disappointed.

Hulk Hogan a tough test for Backlund

The wrestling world is still buzzing over the Sammartino-Zbysko situation — one for which we can reasonably expect some solution by April 12 when the pair meet again in a no-holds-barred battle in the Spectrum.

In addition to the Sammartino return, two titles will also be at stake that night in the Spectrum. World champion Bob Backlund will have his hands full as he faces the very impressive Hulk Hogan. The World Tag Team titles will also be on the line when defending title holders Tito Santana and Ivan Putski tangle with the very formidable team of Lou Albano's Wild Samoans.

Any one of these three matches could be the main event in any arena in the country, but promoter Phil Zacko is not sparing any expense in his attempt to make the Spectrum the mecca for professional wrestling.

Now to the mailing:

Dear Gorilla Monsoon,
I am an avid admirer of the sport of wrestling. Besides Sammartino and other super wrestlers, I am especially fond of Tito Santana.

I am finding it difficult to find any information about him. Is it possible for you to provide me with an address where I might write for this information?

Elizabeth Simmons
Teiford, Pa.

First of all, if you'd been reading our column regularly, you would have noticed we did a personality profile on Tito not so long ago. Maybe one of your associates has it. I'm not sure at this time if Tito has a fan club or not, although I'm pretty sure he does, as most professionals have one. He can be reached, as all professional wrestlers in the World Wrestling Federation can, at: Wrestling Associates, P.O. Box 517, Willingboro, N.J. 08046.

Dear Gorilla,
Do you think Larry Zbysko turned bad so he could get a shot at Bob Backlund's belt?

Jolene Workman
Jeffersonville, Pa.



In this corner

GORILLA MONSOON

I personally don't believe that Larry Zbysko is heading in his current direction due to a title quest. I don't personally feel that when Sammartino finishes with him he will get a title shot. This is a personal feud between Larry and Bruno and it does not involve the current wrestling world situation. Should Larry manage to gain a decisive victory over the former world champion, Bruno Sammartino, I'm sure the commissioners of the World Wrestling Federation would have to consider him for a title shot.

Dear Mr. Monsoon,

Why doesn't Bob Backlund ever defend his belt against wrestlers such as Bruno Sammartino, Ivan Putski or yourself?

John Fenton
Philadelphia

We've answered this question many times. Just to reiterate, there are certain rules put out by the World Wrestling Federation that must be complied with in order to maintain the proper status for a title shot. According to some of these rules, people such as myself or Bruno must do extensive traveling, not only throughout the United States, but also out of the country to meet the proper talent and obtain the proper record. I personally would not be interested in a title match with Bob Backlund, or anyone else who would happen to have the title, because being the champion requires much too hectic a schedule for me at this point in my career.

Dear Gorilla,
I heard Bruno Sammartino was fighting Larry Zbysko in a Texas death match April 12. My question is what is a Texas death match and what are the rules?

Dave Lauber
Drexel Hill

A Texas death match has the following rules. There are no disqualifications and there are no count-outs. In other words a wrestler could be outside the ring for 20 minutes and there would not be a count-out. The match cannot be stopped for outside interference.

ence or the use of foreign objects. It should make for a very interesting match.

Here are two of Gorilla Monsoon's weekly columns from Philadelphia, Pa.

The one to the left is for March 12, 1980 while the other is for March 19, 1980.

Time to defend All-Asiatic title

As this column goes to press, yours truly will be making a tour of Port of Spain, Barbados, and Puerto Rico, defending my All-Asiatic title. Once a year I have to defend my crown outside the U.S., and so far I have been very lucky in retaining it. But each year the competition gets tougher and I get older.

As most wrestling fans don't know, the world champion, Bob Backlund, must defend his title at least once a month. However, the challenges are so numerous that Bob is currently averaging four title defenses a month. I'm sure that this type of scheduling will eventually cost Backlund his championship. He suffers some kind of injury in every match and he's not giving them enough time to heal.

When former champion Bruno Sammartino lost his title to Ivan Koloff, a dislocated shoulder was the underlying reason. Dean Ho and Tony Garea lost their World Tag Team title due to a leg injury to Garea which took place the week of the title defense.

A very important aspect of any pro wrestler's livelihood certainly is to try to keep secret his many injuries, especially from the likes of Captain Lou Albano, Fred Blassie and the Grand Wizard.

Now to the mail.
Dear Mr. Monsoon:
A few years ago I read an ar-

ticle in a wrestling magazine concerning a possible end to your wrestling career. Think back upon this 1976 article, I am inclined to question its legitimacy. It said that a doctor told you that unless you lost a lot of weight you might develop a serious case of diabetes, and that if you did contract diabetes your career

be over. I realize that wrestling magazines seldom tell the full story and that your career is going well, but I still can't help wondering if there was any truth to the article.

Aaron Atchick
Philadelphia

Actually, there was a lot of truth to that particular article, even though most wrestling magazines tend to exaggerate a great deal. I currently am a diabetic and have it under control quite nicely.

Dear Gorilla:

I'm a regular reader of your column and look forward to it every week. You do a great job.

As a big fan of Lou Albano, I'm wondering what you think prompted him sitting down with his lawyers and deciding to spend \$100,000 for Pat Patterson. It seemed to me right from the beginning that the chemistry between the Captain and Patterson was never right.

Angelo DeBrina

Yeadon

I agree with you 100 percent that there was certainly a lack of compatibility between Pat Patterson and Captain Lou.

Melvin Bishop

Philadelphia

I'm sure, however, that the Captain, felt that having the Intercontinental Heavyweight champion as a member of his stable would be a feather in his cap and money in the bank. Everyone knows that the match certainly wasn't made in heaven. The money was definitely not wasted because Lou Albano has since had that contract voided and the money returned.

Dear Gorilla:

Has Bob Backlund ever wrestled Harley Race or Nick Bockwinkel? Did he win or lose?

Dan Keating
Hilton, N.J.

To the best of my knowledge Bob Backlund has wrestled Harley Race on one occasion. The match was held in the Orange Bowl in Miami at which time I was fortunate to be assigned as a special guest referee. After one hour the match was terminated and declared a draw, because it had a one-hour time limit. Being very close to the match I felt that neither wrestler had a distinct advantage at any particular time.

Bob Backlund has wrestled Nicky Bockwinkel in Toronto's Maple Leaf Gardens. I'm not sure of the exact outcome of the match, but Backlund is still our champion.

Dear Gorilla:

I heard a rumor that the reason Mil Máscaras wears a mask is because he has a type of fungus on his face. Is this true? Why do some wrestlers wear masks?

Melvin Bishop

Philadelphia

First of all I know that Mil Máscaras does not have any kind of fungus on his face. In fact he is a very handsome individual and a very well-liked and important movie star in his homeland of Mexico.

The reason for many wrestlers wearing masks sometimes makes it easier. I know it has to be very uncomfortable to breathe and difficult to see. They all have to be registered with the State Athletic Commission with their current name, so I really can't see any advantage to wearing a mask in the ring.

In this corner

GORILLA MONSOON

In this corner**GORILLA MONSOON****All-Asiatic Title
still in my hands**

I was lucky enough to retain my All-Asiatic Title in three defenses last week. In Port of Spain I defeated the dangerous Abdullah the Butcher and obtained a decision over Cyclone Negra. And in San Juan, Puerto Rico, I was disqualified in a rule interpretation against Moose Marouski, but I didn't lose my title as titles can only change hands on a pinfall or submission.

So, all things being equal, I can say it was a good week for me and I'm really happy to be back home in the greatest country on earth.

* * *

This week's personality profile is on one of the best loved men in pro wrestling today, Angelo Savoldi. Angelo is now retired from the ring, but in his day was one of the all-time greats. Angie was born and raised in Hoboken, N.J., where he grew up on the same block with Old Blue Eyes, Frank Sinatra.

Angelo's wrestling career started in 1941 and spanned two decades. During that time he was world heavyweight champion for seven years, winning the title originally from Mike Clancy, losing it to Danny Hodge, getting it back by defeating Haru Satsuda and once again losing it back to Danny Hodge.

During his career he wrestled such greats as Jim London, Ray Steel, Wild Red Berry and Argentina Rocca. Angelo is now employed by Capital Wrestling Corp. and makes his home in Parsippany, N.J. with his lovely wife Mary and four boys.

Now to the mailbag.

Dear Gorilla:

Who do you think had the potential and body and guts to become a great wrestler but flapped?

Glen D. Lite and Howard Nansky
Philadelphia

To the best of my recollection, most individuals who possessed a great body and a lot of guts and wrestling ability certainly would not have been sleep as a profes-



Journal-News photo by Mike Hill

Maybe this is why the Valiant Brothers aren't wrestling in the WWF anymore.

sional. However, there is one individual who stands out in my mind that I thought had all these characteristics and did not really become a star in professional wrestling. That individual is Crusher Verdu. I believe that his greatest downfall was his lack of self denial, being that he fluctuated so much in weight that it was detrimental to his career.

Dear Gorilla:

I would like to know why there isn't better sports reporting on the matches held at the Spectrum in the newspapers and on TV? I enjoy wrestling and I don't get to see the matches at the Spectrum. I don't know how some of the matches turn out because they don't report them on the sports on TV or the sports page in the paper.

Ricky Kazee
Horsham

I can only agree with you 100 percent that, aside from the fantastic sports paper, the Journal, most media are not giving professional wrestling its due. How they can ignore sellouts at the Spectrum completely baffles me. Twenty thousand loyal fans who pack the

Spectrum, as well as the many other thousands at home, certainly have the right to know the results of the matches and it's a shame that they don't get them.

Dear Gorilla:

Why aren't the Valiant Brothers wrestling at the Spectrum? Would you take on Larry Zbysko?

Chris Ossie
Collegeville

The Valiant Brothers currently are not working on the East Coast. In fact at the present time they are not wrestling as a team. Handsome Jimmy is making his living in Tennessee, brother Jerry is currently on a world tour, beginning in the Orient, and John Valiant, at the present time, is not wrestling.

I definitely would have no qualms about climbing in the ring with anyone, especially Larry Zbysko, as Bruno Sammartino has been a very dear friend of mine for the past 15 years and I would like to get some satisfaction for him. However I feel that by the time Bruno is done with Larry there won't be much left of him.

In this corner

GORILLA MONSOON



Hulk eyes Bob's belt

Hulk Hogan, who beat Bob Backlund at the Spectrum April 9, but failed to take Backlund's WWF title, will get another shot May 10 at the Spectrum — but there will still be no guarantee of a title change unless there is a pin fall or takeout.

A co-feature on the May 10 card will pit Olympic强人 Ken Patera against everyone's favorite. Polish Power Ivan Putski, and, in another blockbuster event Big Bob Duncum will face Mr. USA Tony Atlas in his Philadelphia debut. Dick (Bulldog) Brower will meet Dominic DeNucci, Dave O'Hanlon will face Manuel Soto and several other preliminary matches will round out the card.

Now to the mailbag:

10-count for Death Match?

Dear Gorilla:

When did you win the All-Asiatic title, and who did you defeat? I was under the impression you lost the title a few years ago.

Also, when Bruno was wrestling Zbysko in their Texas Death Match, why was referee Dick Woehrle giving the wrestlers the 10-count for being outside the ring? I thought there were no count-outs. And why did Woehrle take the chair from Bruno? Doesn't anything and everything go?

Dave Kerstetter
Burlington, N.J.

First of all I won the All-Asiatic title from Japan's Ricky Shito in September, 1969 and I held it ever since. I certainly would have known if I'd lost it somewhere along the way.

In a Texas Death Match everything does not really go, although it's true there are no count-outs. Dick Woehrle was probably just counting as a form of habit. It's not every day a referee refs a Texas Death Match, especially one of the magnitude of Zbysko and Sammartino. I'm sure that Woehrle also took the chair from Sammartino realizing that Zbysko had already had it and not wanting to see anybody maimed, as could easily have been the case in that match.

The Butcher on animal?

Dear Gorilla:

On your match with Abdullah the Butcher, I've never seen him wrestle, but I hear he's quite an animal in and out of the ring. Is this true and will Abdullah be visiting the WWF any time soon?

Kendi Hale
Pottstown

Your recollection is quite correct, he is sort of an animal and is strictly a rule breaker, however, over my 20 years experience in professional wrestling I've learned to adjust my style to almost any man who cares to step into the squared circle. It's always more dangerous to face an opponent the likes of Abdullah the Butcher because he will stop at nothing to inflict permanent damage regardless of the outcome of the match. I cannot see Abdullah the Butcher appearing in the WWF in the near future. He tries to stay mainly in areas where the state athletic commissions do not have a great deal of power because he is such a rulebreaker. He certainly would not have been able to get away, here on the East Coast, with many of the tactics he uses.

All as opponent

Dear Gorilla:

Will you take on Muhammad Ali in a wrestling match? And, does the Grand Wizard have another name?

Mark Osisek
Collegeville

I definitely would once again enter the ring with Muhammad Ali, however, I'm not too sure whether he would be too happy about it as our last confrontation lasted only a matter of seconds, and I am sure that Ali will think twice about ever entering the ring again with a professional wrestler. But I also have to add that I think he is probably the greatest heavyweight fighter in the history of professional boxing.

To the best of my knowledge the Grand Wizard has a legitimate name which his mother gave him but I'm not sure what that name is, and even if I did know it I'm not sure it would be right for me to reveal it. On many occasions I've heard a lot of choice adjectives used on him other than the Grand Wizard.

GOULET A GEM

I guess everything has been set, all we can do now is wait for the results from the great night of wrestling Saturday at the Spectrum. I'm sure it will prove most interesting.

In this corner

GORILLA MONSOON



This week's personality profile is on one of pro wrestling's outstanding veterans — Rene Goulet.

Rene was born and raised in Nice, France, where he grew up in a very closely-knit family life — as is the common practice of most European families. Rene, upon completion of his education, went on to college and received a degree in business administration. During his formative years, Rene loved all sports and participated in tennis, soccer and wrestling. He had an outstanding amateur wrestling record, which made it obvious why so many promoters were anxious to get him under contract.

Goulet started his pro career in 1960 and his great wrestling ability and fantastic personality made him an overnight sensation. One can always tell a wrestler's ability merely by looking at the track record of countries that he's wrestled in. Here are just a few of the places Rene has been: Germany, France, Australia, Canada, Japan, South America and, of course, the United States.

Rene has held some impressive titles in his 20 years as a pro — Australian Heavyweight champion, European Heavyweight champion and Pacific Coast Heavyweight champion. Probably his most cherished title is that which he held with another outstanding European wrestler, Karl Gotch. This was the World Heavyweight Tag Team championship, which they won in 1971.

Rene is still looking for the greatest accomplishment of all — the World Heavyweight title. He is a devoted family man and spends as much time as his profession allows travelling outdoors with his family.

I have been in this business for a very long time, and I don't know

of anyone who has had anything derogatory to say about Rene Goulet. He is a man above men in pro wrestling.

Now a dip into the mailbag:

McMahon super

Dear Gorilla,

Just want to say I think Vince McMahon Jr. is a great commentator. Could you possibly have an interview with him and give us some information on his background?

B. McCollum
Philadelphia

I am of the same opinion you are. One week in the near future we will do a personality profile on Vince McMahon Jr.

WWF influence

Dear Gorilla,

Has the WWF gained any jurisdiction or influence over Japanese wrestling since Mr. Shimo became the Federation president and Dragon Fugimatsu won the Junior Heavyweight title?

Aaron Louis Altchick
Philadelphia

I'm sure that the WWF has put several feathers in its cap under its new president, however I don't believe it has extended its jurisdiction any further than it has over the past decade. The WWF is very highly looked up to by the other wrestling federations. On many occasions they have sought out the WWF for advice, so its track record can speak for itself.

Tag team match?

Dear Gorilla,

Would you consider tag teaming with Bob Backlund or Bruno Sammartino for the title if Ivan Putski and Tito Santana ever lose it? Are you considering fighting Hulk Hogan? Salvatore Fichera
Cinnaminson, N.J.

At this point in my career, I'm really not considering fighting anyone — I'm really in my twilight. However, if Bruno or Bob requested me as a partner against any team, I wouldn't hesitate to accept, because I know the background of both men and I think it would make for an interesting pair.

I would not object to wrestling Hulk Hogan or anyone else if asked to by a promoter — especially a great man like the local promoter, Phil Zacko.

IF YOU WANT
TO DRINK — IT'S
YOUR BUSINESS

IF YOU WANT TO STOP
AND CAN'T — MAKE IT
OUR BUSINESS

ALCOHOLICS
ANONYMOUS
LO 7-0100

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Wednesday, April 30, 1980 /PHILADELPHIA JOURNAL

In this corner

GORILLA MONSOON

Hulk inspires tough training for Backlund

Bob Backlund's manager, Arnold Skaaland, tells Spectrum promoter Phil Zacko that Backlund is currently on the toughest training schedule of his life in preparation for his return match May 10 with Hulk Hogan, the man who defeated him last month.

Backlund admits that the Hulk has been the toughest opponent of his entire career.

* * *

Now to the mailbag:

The traveling belt

Dear Gorilla:

On Nov. 30, 1979 Antonio Inoki pinned Bob Backlund to win the WWF title in Japan. Then on Dec. 6 Backlund apparently won his belt back in Tokyo but he used the ropes in pinning Inoki and WWF president Mr. Shima reversed the decision and returned the belt to Inoki. But Inoki refused to accept the belt under the circumstances and gave it back to Mr. Shima. Then, on Dec. 17 at Madison Square Garden, Backlund went into his match against Bob Duncum without the belt and, after defeating Duncum, Mr. Shima presented the belt to Backlund for unknown reasons.

I want to know why there was not a tournament held to determine a new WWF champ immediately after Inoki returned the belt to Mr. Shima.

*Joe Mannion
Prospect Park*

I don't know exactly where you're getting your information, however the original match which took place in Japan was a disputed result match at which time the championship belt was not awarded to anyone. The belt was held by the WWF and, after reviewing the match, the belt was given back

to Backlund, so consequently he never lost the title.

Don't believe everything you read in wrestling magazines because they are very, very far from the truth.

Who can beat Samoans?

Dear Gorilla:

Who do you think will be able to take the belts away from the Samoans?

*Dave Wetzel
Lebanon*

There are a number of combinations that creep into my mind immediately as good teams with a chance to take the belts. They would include Sammartino-Backlund, Sammartino-Monsoon, Patterson-Andre the Giant, Putski-Patterson or any combination of these men. I don't know if the Samoans or Capt. Lou Albano would be too happy or anxious to sign a match with some of the above-listed individuals.

Comeback for Garea?

Dear Gorilla:

Is Tony Garea making any plans to return to the WWF? If so, how will he react to Larry Zbysko's transition to a rulebreaker? Will he ever again consider being a tag team partner with Zbysko?

*Danny Abecassis
Philadelphia*

Currently Tony Garea is in his homeland, New Zealand, and I understand that he has become involved as a proprietor of a restaurant and at the same time is wrestling in New Zealand and Australia. I don't feel at this time that he would be looking to leave his homeland, with a business at stake and being active enough in wrestling. I'm sure that he would love at a future date to return to the WWF as he had a very successful run here.



Backlund psyched for the HULK

We're only a few days away from the big return match this Saturday at the Spectrum when Bob Backlund once again puts his title on the line against super-heavyweight Hulk Hogan.

I had the pleasure of having lunch yesterday with Spectrum promoter Phil Zacko and the champion. Bob's attitude towards Saturday's match is quite positive. Bob told me that there is no question in his mind that he is in the best physical condition of his entire career. This had been his greatest fear about facing the Hulk.

"When you're in there with a giant that's over 300 pounds he can sap your strength in a hurry," said Backlund, who admitted that's what happened in their first meeting.

* * *

This week's personality profile is Tony Altomore, known to wrestling fans as the Stamford Stomper. Tony was born in Stamford, Conn., and went to Stamford High, where he excelled in all sports and was crowned Connecticut heavyweight wrestling champion. Upon graduation he was awarded a scholarship to the University of Bridgeport (Conn.), where he spent one year before being drafted. Altomore has spent many of his summers as a lifeguard on the beaches of Connecticut and has to his credit 371 recorded rescues. Tony is the type of person who makes friends easily and is highly regarded by his peers.

He is currently employed by Capital Wrestling Corp., sometimes as a referee. He's still in good enough physical condition to climb into the squared circle.

Tony still makes his home in Stamford with his lovely wife Molly, and recently became a grandfather.



In this corner

GORILLA MONSOON

New to the matbag:

Dear Mr. Monsoon:

Why is it that a wrestler can bleed profusely during a match, and appear on TV the following week with no scars or cuts on his face. For that matter, even wrestle in another week. Bob Backlund bled like crazy against many opponents only to wrestle one or two weeks later with no signs of any scars whatsoever.

If a boxer gets cut during a fight the scars show afterwards, and it takes them time to heal, at least a month. Also many fighters have scar tissue around their eyes. And, as many times as Backlund has bled, it's unreal that he doesn't have any facial damage.

Admit it sir, your profession is entirely show business!

David Vincent Breslin
Philadelphia

Bob Backlund does carry a great deal of scar tissue on his face. I don't know how close you ever got to him. Bruno Sammartino, myself, Pat Patterson, Ken Patera — all our faces look like road maps. Plus, it is very possible that what you are watching on TV was already taped before you saw Backlund or anyone else wrestle live. They are video tapes, and sometimes we use matches that are as much as six or eight months old. I hope this can give you some kind of satisfaction. I certainly have all the scars to prove it, if you want to meet me personally, I would be glad to show them to you.

Dear Gorilla:

Who was the first person to hold the WWF belt?

Fred Klein
Philadelphia

When the World Wide Wrestling Federation came into effect the champion at that time was "Nature Boy" Buddy Rogers. However, his reign was shortened because in June 1963, Bruno Sammartino defeated Rogers in Madison Square Garden in 51 seconds with a buck breaker. Bruno went on to hold that title undefeated for the next nine years — a feat which no other champion has achieved in the sport of professional wrestling.



JOURNAL PHOTO BY MIKE LEVIN
Hulk Hogan clutches Bob Backlund by the back of his shorts and prepares to throw him out of the ring in their last title match at the Spectrum. The two will go at it again Saturday night at the Spectrum.

Body slams can cripple

Dear Gorilla:

We always enjoy watching you wrestle and we feel that you are one of the top grapplers in the WWF. You've fought in many different types of matches and we were wondering if you ever heard of a body slam match, because my best friend saw one in Wisconsin between Dino Bravo and Jerry (Crusher) Blackwell. We all look forward to your next victory at the Spectrum.

The Academy Windsor Wrestling Federation
Philadelphia

I'm slightly familiar with the body slam match. In this type of match only body slams are legal holds. All other types of holds are broken by the referee. Undoubtedly the man who can inflict more body slams will be the winner.

Most pro wrestlers can endure four or five body slams in a 30-minute match without suffering too many injuries. Anything in excess of that would be harmful to the back and upper neck muscles. Many men have been crippled by body slams in fact. Bruno Sammartino suffered a broken back from one. It might be an interesting type of match, but I've never witnessed one.

Zbyszkos related?

Dear Gorilla:

I was reading a wrestling book and I noticed the name Stanislaus Zbyszko. Is he any relation to Larry Zbyszko?

Where is Chief Jay Strongbow? Will he come back to Philly?

Brian Curry
Philadelphia

Stanislaus Zbyszko is definitely not any relation to Larry. He was a Yugoslavian wrestler who was one of the greats during the 40s and 50s. He had some classic matches with Ed Strader, Lewis and the "Golden Greek" Jimmy Londos.

Chief Jay is currently at home in Georgia, and he's presently wrestling in the Carolinas and Georgia. He is certainly looking forward to returning to the WWF, but at this point in time I can't say when. Over the years the Chief has made many great friends here and considers this to be his home away from home.

Any wrestling schools?

Dear Gorilla:

I am an 11-year-old boy who watches wrestling on TV every week. I am very interested in wrestling. Do you know of any schools of wrestling around



In this corner

GORILLA MONSOON

the South Philadelphia area?

Frank Nuciforo
Philadelphia

Not only aren't there any schools for pro wrestling in the Philadelphia area, but to the best of my knowledge, there aren't any in the United States. Anyone who breaks into pro wrestling must have some kind of amateur background before they will be considered by a promoter. Young fellows simply can't apply, they must be sought after by a promoter. If you have outstanding ability and something that makes you unique, they certainly will hear about it and get in touch with you.

A look ahead

Let's now look ahead to the next Spectrum wrestling card

June 21 Some outstanding preliminary bouts end Baron Sincere meeting Rick McGraw, Tor Kamata taking on his toughest competition to date in the Flying Frenchman Rene Goulet along with the Duncan-Atlas match — with no disqualifications, no count-outs, no time limit and the match can be stopped only by a pinfall or submission.

Captain Lou Albano will once again put on the wrestling tights as he joins his World Champion Samoans in a six-man tag team match. Their opposition will be Domenic DeNucci, Pat Patterson and yours truly.

The Battle of the Poles should prove to be a most interesting bout as Larry Zbyszko meets Ivan Putski.

May 21, 1980

In this corner GORILLA MONSOON



Calling all poets!

This week we have a short profile of National Wrestling Alliance champion, Harley Race.

Harley has been a wrestling superstar for the past 18 years. He first won the NWA title from Dory Funk, Jr. in May, 1973. That same year he lost the title to National Collegiate champion Jack Brisco. Harley vowed to get the title back, and on Feb. 6, 1977 he did, defeating the champion at the time, Terry Funk.

Harley realizes that the Northeast is the mecca for all of pro wrestling, and is currently making arrangements for appearances in this area.

* * *

I have some special news for all my loyal readers. Starting tomorrow, along with your regular letters, please send in short poems about professional wrestling. All poems received by June 10 will be eligible for the grand prize, dinner with me following the June 21 Spectrum card.

The winning poem will also appear in my column. Please make sure your return address is legible so that we may get in touch with you.

Now to the mailbag:

Dear Gorilla:

Do you think Pat Patterson can remain a scientific wrestler? Who is the heaviest wrestler?

Brian Corry
Philadelphia

There's no question in my mind that Pat Patterson will remain a scientific wrestler. He has an outstanding amateur background and has the respect and admiration of the wrestling fans.

There have been many huge men in pro wrestling over the years, some of them were Happy Humptree, Haystack Calhoun and The Blimp. All of these men were over 600 pounds. The McGuire twins were each over 650 pounds. However, currently, I believe the largest and heaviest man in pro wrestling is Andre the Giant.

Dear Gorilla:

Where has Hussein Arab gone off to? Is it true that Ivan Putski chased him out of the WWF?

Dan Abecassis
Philadelphia

There's no truth in your statement: The Great Hussein is currently doing very well for himself in North and South Carolina, Georgia and Florida. Unlike many pro wrestlers who outstay their welcome in any given territory, The Arab was smart enough to leave while he was still in great demand, therefore, promoters on the East Coast would be more than happy to offer him contracts to appear in their arenas any time in the near future.

Topeka Capital-Journal
Sunday, May 25, 1980

Gorilla Monsoon loved to wrestle

TOTOWA, N.J. (AP) — He is known simply as "The Gorilla."

And at 6-8 and 387 pounds, who's to argue?

His real name is Bob Marella from Willingboro. His stage, or in this case, ring name, "one that's taken me 15 years to establish," is Gorilla Monsoon.

"The name has been very good to me," Monsoon said recently at a wrestling show at Ice World Arena. "I made a lot of money with it."

It's been a few years since Gorilla Monsoon has been a regular on the wrestling circuit. Except for his extraordinarily large physique and size 14 triple E shoes, Monsoon bears little resemblance to the man wrestling fans loved to hate.

Gone is the long, straggly hair. The messy, unkempt beard is just a memory. The Gorilla, 43, is a respectable looking large man trying to make it as a wrestling promoter.

His days in the ring — he wrestles infrequently now — were marked by controversy, injuries and some of the most colorful matches in wrestling. The Gorilla turned pro in 1960 despite being assured a berth on the Olympic team, picked up his nickname in 1963 from promoter Vince McMahon and was a villain to fans for the next seven years.

He underwent a startling transformation from villain to hero "overnight" when he jumped in the ring to rescue good guy Bruno Sammartino in 1969 in Philadelphia. The fans loved the Gorilla after that.

Wrestling is not considered a sport by purists. Gorilla claims he "never went in the tank," though he admits he carried opponents for 15 minutes to get a good workout rather than go for the quick pin. Wrestling is a show and the wrestlers are performers. The matches might be fixed but it's doubtful any of the Gorilla's laundry list of injuries were preconceived.

Here's a rundown on the Gorilla's considerable misfortune.

He's broken:

Every rib in his body at least twice; both shoulders; left ankle; every finger; three cervical vertebrae have been twisted 90 degrees; and had contusions and concussions "too numerous to mention."

And that's from altercations with his opponents.

"I've been knifed, blackjacked, bottle whipped and had cigars and cigarettes put out on my body by the fans," Monsoon laughed. "At one time I was a very hated individual. It was my trademark. But it's better than teaching school."

But still, why would anybody in his right mind want to be a wrestler. Sure, you can teach yourself how to land when an opponent slams you to the canvas. But how about when you're thrown 12 feet out of the ring to the hard, cold floor? Why do it?

"The top 25 wrestlers make more than \$100,000 a year, some more than \$200,000," Monsoon said, providing the logical answer. "The winners get 70 percent of the purse, that's why I say the matches aren't fixed. I'm talking about a lot of bread and guys do strange things for money."

Though wrestling still has more than its share of skeptics, it's hard to convince the hard core fans they're watching a sham. Madison Square Garden regularly sells out, they've even had to set up closed circuit broadcasts for some of their matches. Wrestling enthusiasts like to get involved in the action, evidenced when the Gorilla was knocked unconscious "for six hours when fans threw 500 folding chairs into the ring."

"We deal in personality conflicts. Good against evil. All pro sports that make money have body contact. If the circus advertises that someone is going to fall and die off the high wire you couldn't buy a ticket," he said. "People are basically sadistic. Wrestling is a great tension relief."

Monsoon, the father of two girls and a boy, says you have to love wrestling to survive in it. He built up a great rivalry with Sammartino, which enabled him to make his biggest purse — \$21,000. The scars, the hurts, the hospital visits, he feels, were worth it.

"All they can do is beat you. As long as the other guy only has two arms, two legs and one head, I don't worry," he roared. "There were many nights during my career I wanted to quit but didn't. I don't like to wrestle anymore. I don't enjoy climbing in the ring. I can rest knowing I had some classic matches."

Monsoon leaned back, anchoring his size 14 triple E shoes ("the size of a compact car," says publicist Kathy Duva) on his desk.

"Wrestling is a vicious, vicious business," he said. "You have to love it. If you survive, it will be good to you."

Wrestling has been very, very good to Gorilla Monsoon.

I WANT Captain Lou

As my fans read this column I will be in Rome. Spectrum promoter Phil Zacko has sent me on this European tour in search of new wrestling talent. However, I will be back in time to compete in the big wrestling card at the Spectrum June 21.

I wouldn't want to miss the big title defense by Bob Backlund against the Olympian Ken Patera. I also can't wait to get my hands on Captain Lou Albano in the big six-man tag team match as Albano has made some very derogatory remarks about me personally that he will have to pay for.

Another highlight on the 21st will be the battle of the poles as Larry Zbysco takes on Polish Power Ivan Putski.

And now, on to the mailbag.

Strained friendship

Dear Gorilla,

Can you please tell me the result of the April 21 Madison Square Garden match between Larry Zbysco and Bruno Sammartino. And do you think that their friendship can once again be restored?

Brian Boran,
Minersville, Pa.

Dear Brian,

The match at the Garden ended with Zbysco being counted out of the ring after having been completely and thoroughly beaten by Bruno. However, as Zbysco left the ring he made some very serious remarks at Bruno and spit in his face so I can't see the feud being over by a long shot. I am sure Bruno won't be satisfied until Zbysco is out of pro wrestling and regardless of what happens from this point forward, they will never again be friends. Too much has gone over the dam.

Bruno a favorite

Dear Gorilla,

I would like to know where Spiros Arion and Superstar Billy Graham are and are they going to return to the World Wrestling Federation. I would also like to congratulate Bruno Sammartino on his victory over Larry Zbysco at the Spectrum. Bruno is my favorite wrestler and is truly the living legend of wrestling.

PHILADELPHIA JOURNAL/Wednesday, June 4, 1980

In this corner

GORILLA MONSOON



Angelo PaPado Poules
Upper Darby

Dear Angelo,

Currently, Spiros Arion is the European champion and is keeping up a very busy schedule. I can't see him leaving Europe at this time as the champion must defend his title every 30 days. I am also sure Spiros would love to return to the W.W.F. He made a great deal of money here but he also burned a lot of bridges.

Superstar Billy Graham is currently wrestling in Texas, Arizona, New Mexico, Missouri and making the occasional trips to Japan, Australia and we can look forward to seeing him back in W.W.F. either later this year or in 1981.

News from Hamburg

Dear Gorilla,

First we want to thank you for the wonderful articles you write and for being the kind of person you are. We see you often in Hamburg and you're never too busy to talk to people or sign autographs.

Our question is, is there anyway we can find out who wins the main event or feature match at Hamburg? We try to get up there often but because of our business we sometimes can't make it. The feature matches are never televised and we're mainly interested in the result of the Larry Zbysco vs. Pat Patterson match. We hope some day soon Larry comes to his senses and realizes what he has done to his career, himself and his fans. Do you think Larry is dirty enough to service on the bad guys side? Also, what happened to Steve Keirn? We heard he was coming to the area? Thank you so much for your time.

Ginny Speier
Honey Brook, Pa.

Dear Ginny,

Thank you so very much for your very complimentary letter. I don't know if there is anywhere that the Hamburg feature match results are listed. In fact, I am sure they're not. The match you're referring to ended in a double disqualification as the referee could not control it. The only way I know you can get these results is by word of mouth, either from some friends of yours that attend regularly or by asking me when you do come down.

My personal opinion of Larry's career is that it is just about over. He has made so many enemies that it will be tough for him to survive in this business.

In this corner**GORILLA MONSOON**

Who's the best: Hulk or Giant?

Promoter Phil Zacko has scheduled four outstanding bouts that will headline the June 21 Spectrum card. WWF champion Bob Backlund puts his title on the line against Olympian Ken Patera.

The Battle of the Poles finds Larry Zbysko taking on Ivan Putski and the big return Texas Death Match between Bob Duncum and Mr. USA Tony Atlas should be a classic.

And don't forget the spectacular six-man tag team match as the Samoans and their manager Lou Albano meet Dominic DeNucci, Pat Patterson and yours truly.

* * *

Before we go to the mailbag I would like to congratulate the Flyers on a most courageous season. Anyone who viewed the final playoff game knows who the true Stanley Cup champions are.

Now to the mailbag.

A really BIG match

Dear Gorilla:

What do you think would happen if Hulk Hogan was to meet Andre the Giant? Do you think Hogan would get pinned?

Joel Bergquist
Hathboro

I think that the question you have asked is on the minds of wrestling fans throughout the country and literally every promoter in the entire country is trying to book that particular match. A meeting between those two giants certainly would be a fantastic match and, from a promoter's viewpoint, would be terrific box office.

I have personally wrestled as Andre the Giant's partner on many occasions and know what he is capable of doing. I have also viewed many, many of Hulk Hogan's matches and know what he's capable of. If I had to bet on a winner, I would have to put my money on the Giant for the following reasons: He possesses greater strength and more experience. However, in a match of this nature anything and everything could happen.

Where's Swede?

Dear Mr. Monsoon:

Could you please tell me where Swede Hansen is now wrestling and is there a chance he will return to the area?

Sandy Kratzke
Allentown

Swede Hansen is currently wrestling and doing extremely well in North and South Carolina as well as Georgia and Alabama. He has a business of his own in North Carolina which is making it convenient for him to work that particular part of the country at this time. However, Swede Hansen made a very big hit here in the World Wrestling Federation and I'm sure that, in the near future, should he decide to contact any of the promoters here on the East Coast, they would be most anxious to have him return.

Poor eyesight?

Dear Mr. Monsoon:

How come in the recent match between Ken Patera and Pat Patterson the officials didn't say anything when the referee counted three, but Patterson had his foot on the rope? This was not the first time this has happened.

Robert Colbert
Philadelphia

Many times it is very difficult for a referee to see everything that takes place within the squared circle. It is not an easy job, and, in fact, a thankless job to be a referee. However, once a referee makes a decision, he has to stick by his guns.

Here's just a short note to remind all you fans who are poets that the deadline for sending poems to me is June 10. Grand prize, for the best poem, is dinner with me following the June 21 Spectrum card.

The winning poem will also appear in my column. Please make sure your return address is legible so that I'm able to get in touch with you.

In this corner

GORILLA MONSOON



Winner-take-all in Death Match

I have received many letters asking to describe in detail what a Texas Death Match is all about.

It seems that the return match between Tony (Mr. Universe) Atlas and Big Bob Dunham at the Spectrum on June 21 has created a great deal of interest, being that it is a Texas Death Match.

First of all, the match had to be agreed upon by both wrestlers before Promoter Phil Zacko could sign it. Both have agreed to the following rules:

There will be no disqualification, a wrestler cannot be counted out of the ring, and the referees cannot stop the match for reasons other than a pinfall or submission. A further stipulation is that whatever the purse money may be for this bout, it will go exclusively to the winner. The loser will receive zero. It is what we call a winner-take-all match.

TO THE MAIL BAG

Hard to be humble

Dear Mr. Monsoon:

I really enjoy your column very much, keep up the good work. I really don't have a question, let me explain what I mean. The other day I heard a new song on the radio by Mac Davis. As I listened to the words, I thought he must have seen and heard Ken Patera in an interview. I think the words of the song fit Mr. Patera just fine.

Here they are:

Oh lord, it's hard to be humble
When you're perfect in every way.
I can't wait to look in the mirror
'Cause I get better looking each day.
To know me is to love me
I must be a hell of a man.
Oh lord, it's hard to be humble
But I'm doing the best I can.

There are other verses, but I think this says it all.

Betty Ambler
Phila

Dear Betty:

I can only agree with you one hundred percent. One of Ken's favorite remarks is it's hard to be humble when you're great. It's truly a shame that an outstanding athlete with fantastic ability, an outstanding Olympic record and other achievements too numerous to mention has to be tied up with someone like Fred Blassie, who has poisoned his mind. The youth of today desperately needs heroes to look up to, and Ken could fit this bill perfectly. However, all that glitter is not gold.

Another chance

Dear Gorilla:

I really enjoy your column in the Journal and appreciate all the work you have done. My questions are, how come Ivan Putski and Tito Santana didn't get another chance at the tag team championship against the Samoans on May 10 at the Spectrum? Did Tatsumi Fujinami lose his junior heavyweight championship to Mike Graham?

Name Withheld

There definitely should have been a return for the tag team title and Promoter Phil Zacko tried to book the match, but Tito Santana had made a commitment for a tour of the Orient for the month of May, so the match was out of the question. Tito is supposed to return here following the tour, so I'll have further information on that this summer.

To the best of my knowledge, the junior heavyweight title has not changed hands. Mr. Shima, president of the World Wrestling Federation, has not to date sent out notices to that effect.

OUCH!

Dear Mr. Monsoon:

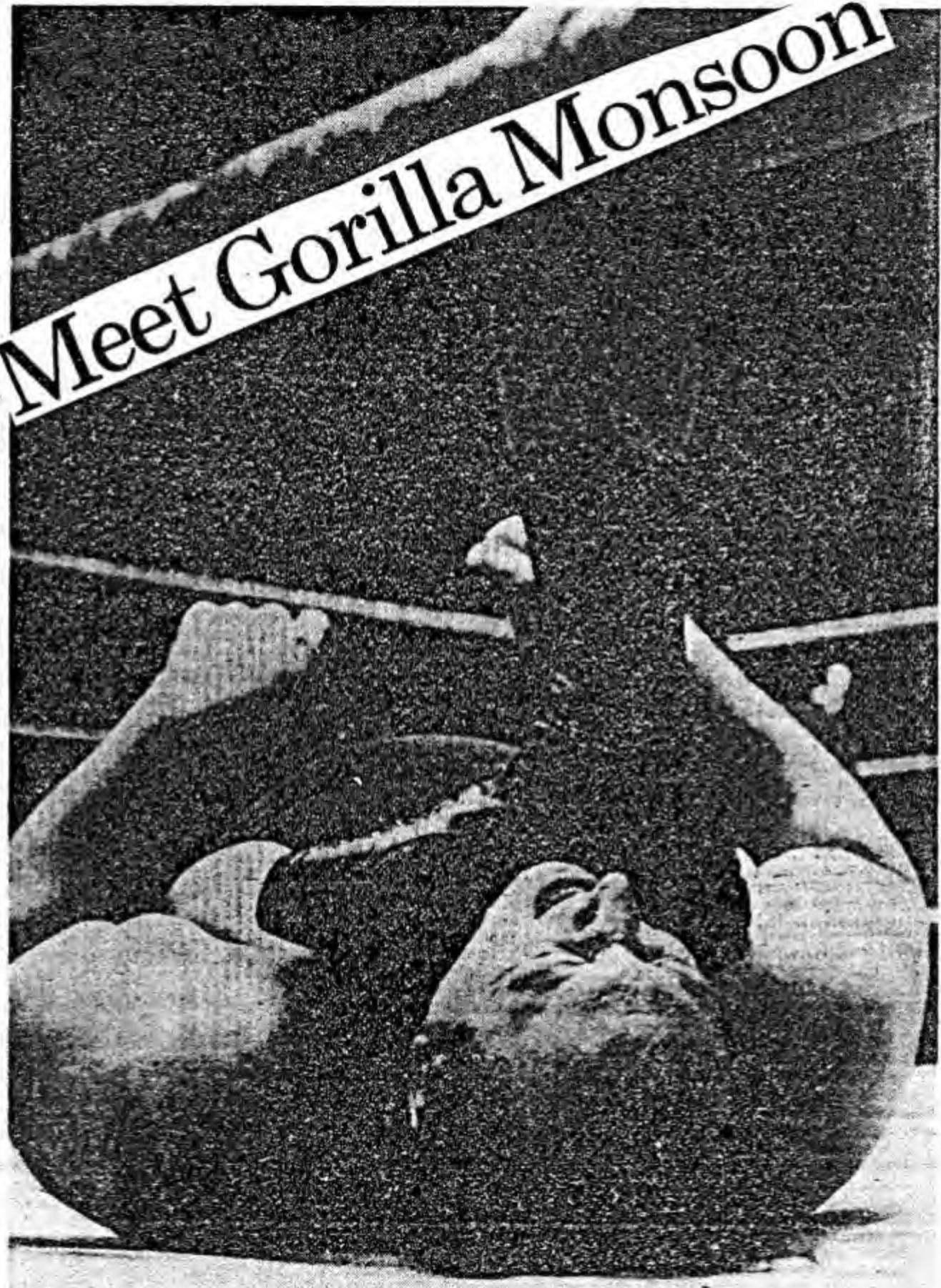
What injuries have you received over 20 years in the ring?

Troy Vopper
Willingboro, N.J.

Dear Troy:

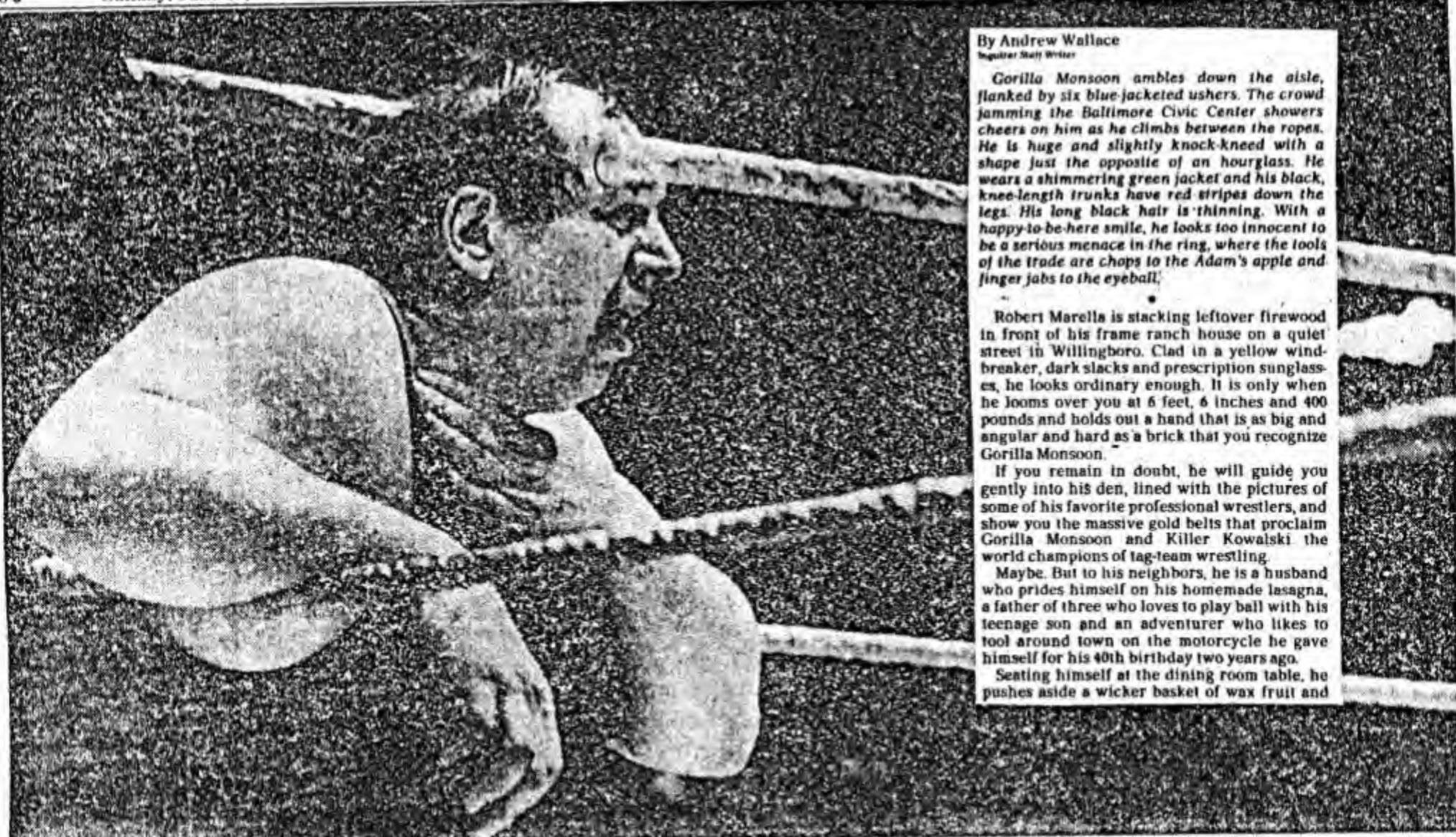
On many days it's easy to remember because they all ache. I've broken over 10 ribs more than once, left shoulder, left wrist, right ankle, several fingers, a severely twisted cervical vertebrae, numerous torn ligaments and muscles and countless contusions and concussions. I've broken my nose five times. Just the thought of these injuries brings pain.

Meet Gorilla Monsoon



Philadelphia Inquirer / BILL BALLEMBERG

The wrestler from Willingboro, here held in toe by Baron Mikel Scicluna, is really a pussycat. Page 8.



By Andrew Wallace
Regular Staff Writer

Gorilla Monsoon ambles down the aisle, flanked by six blue-jacketed ushers. The crowd jamming the Baltimore Civic Center showers cheers on him as he climbs between the ropes. He is huge and slightly knock-kneed with a shape just the opposite of an hourglass. He wears a shimmering green jacket and his black, knee-length trunks have red stripes down the legs. His long black hair is thinning. With a happy-to-be-here smile, he looks too innocent to be a serious menace in the ring, where the tools of the trade are chops to the Adam's apple and finger jabs to the eyeball.

Robert Marella is stacking leftover firewood in front of his frame ranch house on a quiet street in Willingboro. Clad in a yellow windbreaker, dark slacks and prescription sunglasses, he looks ordinary enough. It is only when he looms over you at 6 feet, 6 inches and 400 pounds and holds out a hand that is as big and angular and hard as a brick that you recognize Gorilla Monsoon.

If you remain in doubt, he will guide you gently into his den, lined with the pictures of some of his favorite professional wrestlers, and show you the massive gold belts that proclaim Gorilla Monsoon and Killer Kowalski the world champions of tag-team wrestling.

Maybe. But to his neighbors, he is a husband who prides himself on his homemade lasagna, a father of three who loves to play ball with his teenage son and an adventurer who likes to tool around town on the motorcycle he gave himself for his 40th birthday two years ago.

Seating himself at the dining room table, he pushes aside a wicker basket of wax fruit and

In this corner, Gorilla Monsoon, during a Spectrum match with Baron Mikel Scicluna; Monsoon (Robert Marella) used to play villain, but now he's the white hat

He's the man who turned into a Gorilla and upended Muhammad Ali

Personality

talks about being a couple of times too tough and several sizes too big for the ordinary world. "At my size, I am powerful, and when the adrenalin flows, there is no telling how powerful I am," he says without bragging. "I could kill in my sleep and never know it," he adds with a wink at his wife, Maureen, whose weight is less than one-third his. Had he been of ordinary stature, the playful slap she gives him in response would have knocked him under the table.

"I broke the shoulder of my college coach by accident," confesses Marella, who will be fighting in a six-man tag-team match at the Spectrum in Philadelphia this Saturday. "I reached back like this for a wizzard (an arm lock) and drew him down across me and — crack! It just snapped."

Ordinarily, he is not reluctant to use his size or his strength. "I once hit a guy who was hassling a woman at a bus stop," he says. "I knocked him through a plate-glass window. He was unconscious for 12 hours." His tone is matter-of-fact. He acknowledges that "as a pro, I have to watch myself. People are so lawsuit-conscious."

Gorilla's opponent, Joe Mascara, a blond, 228-pound, well-muscled Adonis, has somehow driven him into a corner and begins to hit, butt and kick the dazed giant. Gorilla pushes him away and begins shuffling after him across the ring like a bear stalking a hunter who had taken his best shot and missed.

An exaggerated look of panic comes across Adonis' face and he dodges through the ropes to stare at Monsoon from the apron of the ring. Monsoon smiles a nice I-wouldn't-hurt-you-for-the-world smile as he gallantly holds open the ropes for the younger man.

The crowd screams approval. The screams start again when Monsoon jams Adonis into a corner, grabs him in a headlock and scrapes his face along the ropes, something he can get away with because he is a good guy and good guys are only nasty when provoked, and then they can get away with almost anything — in the name of an-eye-for-an-eye justice.

Size has its compensations. It has enabled Marella to become a better than average super-heavyweight wrestler, earning a six-figure salary that allows him to buy silk shirts, travel where he wants and support four cars. And it keeps him from getting sand kicked in his face — even when the kicker happens to be the world heavyweight boxing champ.

That happened one night when Muhammad Ali and some friends showed up at the Arena in Philadelphia and began taunting him. After Marella had won his bout, he invited Ali into the ring. The boxer stripped to the waist, removed his shoes and climbed in. For eight minutes, Marella stalked the elusive Ali, who tried to end it all with one long-range punch. Finally, Marella caught him, hoisted him on his shoulders, spun him around several times and dumped him to the mat. End of fight.

"I knew that if I got close enough to grab him, it was all over," he chortles as he watches the videotape of his triumph for the umpteenth time.

But size also has its problems. Marella's

clothes have to be tailored and his shoes specially made. He has to travel first class (fortunately, he can afford it). He sleeps on an extra-firm mattress in a king-sized bed. He has problems with reclining chairs — he sits the bottoms out on the average of one every six months.

Marella took up the sport of wrestling when he was 8 years old and growing up in Rochester, N.Y. In high school and at Ithaca College, he excelled in wrestling, track and football. In track, he set New York State scholastic records in the shot and discus.

In football, he played center, tackle and fullback, and had the tools to attract several pro offers. He turned them down because he had injured a knee and a doctor told him that "if I ever played, I would never walk any more."

Instead, he concentrated on wrestling. After graduating from college with a degree in physical education and physiotherapy, he toured with an American team promoting the 1960 Olympics. He probably would have made the Olympic team that year, but he couldn't afford to.

"All those medals and trophies are fine, but all of them and a dime will get you a cup of coffee," he says, lighting up a mentholated cigarette. "I had quite a bit of publicity from the worldwide tour and I got a call from a promoter in Toronto. I still remember it. It was on a Sunday morning. I was teaching school at the time so it was no big decision to make, teachers' salaries being what they were." The promoter's offer was \$500 a week, and that was 20 years ago.

At that time, the promoter capitalized on the publicity Marella had gotten from the tour. He became Gorilla Monsoon in 1964 when he



Monsoon rests in his dressing room

Sunday, June 15, 1980

Philadelphia Inquirer

9-J



Philadelphia Inquirer / BRIAN BALLENTINE

The 400-pound Hercules is something of a homebody, priding himself on his lasagna; here he watches the pot while his wife Maureen smilingly watches him

changed his base of operations from Toronto to New York's Madison Square Garden, wrestling's big time. There, because a promoter thought the area needed "an animal," Marella turned savage. He became one of those strutting, dirty-dealing baddies the crowds love to hate.

That was part of the show, something Marella argues is necessary. "Otherwise, the arenas would be empty. If you're not into wrestling or if you don't know someone personally, watching high school or college wrestling is like watching grass grow. I enjoy it, but I know a zillion people who would not walk across the street to see it," he says.

Marella also admits that he has carried weaker wrestlers for 10 minutes just to entertain fans. But he insists that the matches are not faked. Winners get 70 percent of the purse and the loser gets the rest. Few wrestlers can afford to lose, he says.

Wrestling can be a painful way to make a living. In the ring, Marella has splintered ribs and has broken both shoulders; outside the ropes, he has been blackjacked, beamed and beaten with bottles, jabbed with knives, swatted with chairs, kicked and socked. Angry fans have cursed his wife and attacked his car.

"You know," he philosophizes, "people are basically sadistic and wrestling plays to the sadistic tendencies of people. If the circus was coming and you could advertise that that night someone would fall from the high wire, you wouldn't be able to buy a ticket."

Adonis leans down, grabs Monsoon's leg and lifts. The leg remains rooted in place. Exasperated, he drops the leg, gets behind Gorilla and attempts a bear hug. His hands do not meet. Finally, he puts an arm under Gorilla and lifts. He looks like a drunk trying to wrestle a refrigerator.

One of the few times Marella has been afraid was when about six fans jumped him from all directions. "Fortunately, the first one had a chair. I took it away from him and the rest were mine," he says. He was also reluctant to get into the ring with "Terrible Ted," a 900-pound wrestling bear. "He could smother you," Marella says.

Some of the battles he now recalls nostalgically as some of his finest, most painful hours were against Bruno Sammartino, who reigned as world champion for 15 years. "He was the most powerful man in pro wrestling," Marella says. "He could press 565 pounds." Sometimes the two of them went 90 bloody minutes without a decision. Marella's one regret was that he was never able to wrestle away Sammartino's crown, even though several times he battered the champ so badly that the referee stopped the fight and awarded Monsoon the victory. (To win the championship, the challenger has to pin the champ or force him to give up.)

About 1972, with a single, uncharacteristic good deed, Marella switched sides and became a hero in the eyes of the screaming fans who, until then, wanted nothing more than to see him maimed. "It happened spontaneously at Philadelphia's Channel 48 during the filming of a TV show," he says. The evil Dr. Jerry Graham had Marella's old nemesis, Sammartino, groggy in the ring and went to get a two-by-four. "I stopped him from doing a job on Sam-

martino and that made me the greatest thing since sliced bread," he says, his eyes twinkling.

That's the way it has been since. Now his ring reputation mirrors his behavior outside the arena, where he is truly a white hat — a man more concerned with family, friends and charity work than on winning a wrestling crown or making piles of money.

Standing in the driveway beside his sporty, sky-blue Cadillac with landau roof, Marella says he turned down \$5,000 a week to wrestle in Japan because his wife did not want him to be away from home so long.

Now that he is a respected veteran, and an articulate one at that, he has gotten into promoting and public relations. Now he doesn't have to go to the mat every night any more. But even when he did, he says he tried to arrange his schedule to spend as much time as possible with his children, daughters Sharon, 21, and Valerie, 14, and son, Joey, 17.

He is also devoting more time to charity and to lecturing kids about drugs and setting life goals. One of the accomplishments he is proudest of is making good on a pledge to raise \$12,000 to combat juvenile diabetes.

Finally, after about 4½ minutes, Gorilla grows tired of the game, tired of smiling. He seizes his opponent by the arm, flings him against the ropes and holds out his arm so that the smaller wrestler's chest smacks into it as he bounces off. Stunned, Adonis falls on his back. Gorilla kneels, gently, on his shoulders and the referee slaps the mat: One. Two. Three. It's all over.

Here's the winning wrestling poem

My recent tour of Italy was most enjoyable, however somewhat discouraging, as far as the wrestling talent that I saw.

I guess I must be a bit spoiled because we have the finest wrestling talent in the world here on the East Coast all the time. Nevertheless, it's most gratifying knowing I possess a USA passport and can get back to this country, which is undoubtedly the greatest country in the world.

And now, the news that everyone has been waiting for, the winner of the wrestling poem contest. Today we're printing the winning poem and the writer will be my guest Saturday night at the Spectrum and will also be my guest for dinner following the bouts. She will receive her tickets by mail.

So, here's the poem.

* * *

On Saturdays, when it's just him and me,
His eyes are glued to the TV.
When I walked by, to my surprise,
There were these great big, strangely dressed guys.
I knew what they were doing was supposed to be fun,
But of these holds, I knew not one.
I thought it was silly to watch these men.

In this corner

GORILLA MONSOON



But to be a good wife, I sat down there and then.
I kept asking questions, like who is who,
My husband said if you keep this up you'll know more than I do.
And as each week went on I came to decide

Backlund defeated

Bob Backlund tuned up for this Saturday's wrestling at the Spectrum by losing to good guy turned bad Larry Zybysko Monday night in Madison Square Garden. Backlund held on to his WWF belt, however, because the bout was called at 27:39 when profuse bleeding from a cut above Backlund's right eye caused the referee to stop it. A title can only change hands on a pin fall or count out.

That when wrestling came on I would sit by his side.
For I found out I liked this stuff.
And now the TV was not enough.
So down to the Spectrum once a month we go
So I can watch this wrestling show.
And I whistle and holler and shout and cheer
I only missed going once this year.
So now I'm addicted and can't stay away
And if they had it, I'd go every day.
Because I have found that not much is more fun
Than watching these matches, each and every one.

Robin Collins
Philadelphia

* * *
Congratulations Robin on your interesting and clever poem. I'll be waiting to meet you Saturday night at the Spectrum after I clean up Capt. Lou Albano and his Samoans.

WILD SAMOANS

Once again I want to thank Robin Collins for her most interesting winning poem, which was published last week. I'm sure she enjoyed the matches last Saturday night and I hope she enjoyed the dinner afterward.

Let's take a look at what happened on last Saturday's card. The six-man tag was obviously too wild for one referee to control and without fear of contradiction, we were robbed when the decision was given to the Samoans and Captain Lou.

Mr. USA Tony Atlas really did a number on Bob Backlund and was awarded the victory in the Texas death match. The Battle of the Poles turned out to be a real Pier 15 brawl winding up with Ivan Putski outside the ring unable to answer the 10-count and a gloating Larry Zbysko prancing around with the win.

The main event featured an unusual ending. During a series of criss-crosses, Bob Backlund unintentionally struck referee Mario Savoldi and knocked him completely out of the ring and unconscious. Ken Patera at this point was covering Backlund for a pin, but there was no referee to count. Barney Solomon, another referee seated at ringside, made his way into the ring, called for the bell, and awarded the match to Patera, having disqualified Backlund for striking the official. Patera, enraged at not winning the title, struck Backlund several times with the championship belt and Bob literally had to be carried from the ring.

Since last Saturday night I have received two phone calls concerning that match; one from the Pennsylvania State Athletic Commission and one from promoter Phil Zacko. Both calls asked the same question, would I consider taking the role as a special guest referee to handle the already-signed return match between Backlund and Patera which will take place at the Spectrum July 25. My only question was what rules would be in effect and were there to be any special considerations given to these rules? Both parties assured me that all current rules would apply. I gave them my acceptance. I'll have the entire July 25 card for you next week.

Now to the mailbag:

Dear Gorilla:

Who was the toughest opponent you have ever faced and who was the wildest op-

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

/Wednesday, June 25, 1980

In this corner

GORILLA MONSOON



ponent you ever faced?

Sim Gozdenovich
Hilltop, N.J.

The toughest opponent is an easy one. Over the years, without any question, my toughest opponent was Bruno Sammartino. We had some classic confrontations that will live in the annals of wrestling history. Unfortunately, from those matches we also received many serious injuries which are still with us today and will be with us forever. However, Bruno and I are the best of friends today and many times laugh at the way we tried to maim each other in the early 60s.

As of last Saturday night I can truly say that the Samoans live up to their reputation of being the Wild Samoans. They are the most unorthodox wrestlers I've ever been in the ring with. You usually can anticipate moves that your opponent is going to make. However, with these two crazy men that is not the case, so you're really at wit's end at

times.

Dear Mr. Monsoon:

Why is it that only the top wrestlers are ever seen with their managers? Lou Albano is always seen with the Valiant Brothers and Bulldog Brower, the Grand Wizard with Greg Valentine and Arnold Skoland with Bob Backlund and Bruno Sammartino. Why don't wrestlers like you or Johnny Rodz or Ted DiBiase have managers?

Bill Heins
Oaklyn, N.J.

With the exception of maybe 25 or 30 top wrestlers in the country today, most wrestlers do not have managers. They are self-employed independent contractors, doing their own booking and their own thinking. Usually when an individual is a title holder he will need a manager, not so much to advise him in the ring, but to take care of his traveling itinerary, make sure he receives the proper percentage in a number of different contracts, and, in general, take care of most of his paperwork.



Gorilla Monsoon makes one of the Wild Samoans open wide during last Saturday's Spectrum card.

Journal photo by Mike Levin

Below: Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 7/2/80

Spectrum lines up attractive card

As I promised last week, here's the complete card for the Spectrum on Saturday, July 26. Tor Kamata will meet a newcomer from Santo Domingo, making his debut at the Spectrum, Angel Marivila; Larry Sharp meets sensational Rick McGraw; four women will meet in a special attraction Australian tag team match; Samoan No. 1 will have his hands full as he tangles with former world champion Pedro Morales; and Samoan No. 2 will try to solve the fancy moves of popular Rene Goulet.

There are two return matches set for July 26. One of them is between Larry Zbysko and Ivan

In this corner

GORILLA MONSOON



Putsik. The second return match is between Olympic strongman Ken Patera and the current WWF champion Bob Backlund. This is the main event with yours truly as the guest referee. Undoubtedly this is one of the biggest cards set for the Spectrum this year and there's still more to come.

Spectrum promoter Phil Zacko has been successful in signing a match that the whole country has been trying to get, the battle of the undefeated super-heavyweights, as Incredible Hulk Hogan will face the Eighth Wonder of the World, Andre the Giant.

I would like to extend my personal congratulations to Mr. Zacko for his outstanding booking and for sparing no expense in bringing the best of pro wrestling to the Philadelphia area.

As far as the main event is concerned, in the minds of most

wrestling fans it would appear that Patera would be upset about me being the guest referee, however Ken seems happy about the situation because he knows that I am not going to get knocked out of the ring and that's what cost him the title during the last Spectrum card. This match will undoubtedly be a classic. If you don't see another wrestling bout this year, see this one.

Now to the mailbag

Ribs intact

Dear Mr. Monsoon:

Is it true that Tito Santana has broken ribs from the Samoan drop at the Spectrum when he and Putsik lost the belts?

Kimberly Saber
Wilmington, Del.

It is definitely not true. Tito Santana received some minor injuries during that particular title match, however he's currently wrestling and in fact wrestled the Monday following that particular match. Tito left the WWF because he was committed to a world tour, however I'm sure that he would have been more happy to leave that part of the country still being a co-holder of the world tag team championship.

Zbysko snatched

Dear Mr. Monsoon:

I had read in the August issue of "The Wrestler" that Larry Zbysko was considering having either Blasie, Lou Albano or the Grand Wizard as a manager. Is this true? And also, I had read that Zbysko and Tony Garea are still friends. Is this true?

Annette Perez
Franklinville, N.J.

To the best of my knowledge Larry Zbysko has not been and is not now looking for a manager. Larry Zbysko is a very intelligent college graduate who certainly doesn't need the advice of a Fred Blasie, Lou Albano or Grand Wizard. Also Larry, undoubtedly at this point in his career, is trying to save as much money as he possibly can.



Photo by Mike Lewis

Hulk Hogan, here applying a hold to champion Bob Backlund, will be on the next Spectrum wrestling card going against Andre the Giant.

proven by the most concrete evidence, the film.

Pat Patterson — the Intercontinental Championship Belt's only true owner — is a brilliant athlete who manifests dignity, morality and pride, even though de-throned. Pat outshines every opponent he faces. Pat Patterson has the support of all of his fans.

So, Mr. Monsoon, why hasn't the officials acted on all the evidence (film, fans, witnesses) brought forth and assigned a rematch or returned the title that was taken from Pat Patterson?

Diana Faracchio
Philadelphia

First of all, by the time World Wrestling Federation president Mr. Shima received word of the controversial finish, it was already old news, being that he makes his home in Japan. Upon reviewing the film, however, he did call for a return match to be scheduled. Since then Patera and Patterson have met in four return matches. Unfortunately, none were won by Patterson.

Ken Patera was unjustly awarded the Intercontinental Championship title, thousands of fans witnessed it, and this fact can easily be

seen as you as far as the ruling by the WWF.

Garea is checking on Zbysko rumors

Tony Garea is coming back to the WWF, and, as he recently told me, the major reason for his return to this area, after a successful tour of Europe and the Orient, is to get to the bottom of the stories and rumors about his former tag partner, the now rule-breaking Larry Zbysko.

Tony has been involved in athletics all his life. At the age of five he was participating in rugby in his native New Zealand. Tony was an excellent player and one of the first men to combine weight lifting and isometrics into rugby. When Tony was approached by a New Zealand promoter to try pro wrestling, he was all for it. He wasn't a stranger to the sport because his cousin was the heavyweight champ of Auckland for many years.

Tony has to his credit the following championships: New Zealand heavyweight champion; South Pacific heavyweight champion; co-holder of the world tag team title in 1973 with partner Haystack Calhoun, in 1974 with partner Dean Ho, and again in 1978 with Zbysko.

Tony has been trying to get a crack at the world title for many years and I'm sure with his record he will not be denied a chance. It remains to be seen what will happen to the relationship between Garea and Zbysko. As world tag team champions they were very close.

* * *

I just want to remind all our wrestling fans in the Philadelphia area about the super card coming to the Spectrum Saturday, July 26, featuring a world title defense by champion Bob Backlund against Olympic strongman Ken

Patera with yours truly as the special guest referee.
Now to the mailbag.

Why a ref?

Dear Gorilla:

Why have a referee in the ring when it's a Texas death match where anything is allowed?

*Wally Marinari
Norristown*

In a Texas death match all rules, more or less, do not apply, however a referee is required for many reasons. First, he must declare a winner. Another reason can be that many times in this type of match a stalemate may occur where neither man has the other in a compromised position yet all action has ceased. A referee can also render a decision on whether one wrestler is unable to continue and award a winner.

What's the payoff?

Dear Gorilla:

How does a wrestler get paid — by the day, week or month? And do they have to pay a fee to enter the ring? If so, how much? How much does a wrestler have to pay for a license?

*June Miller
Easton*

All wrestlers fall under the jurisdiction of the state athletic commission where they work. The license fees will vary from state to state, ranging

In this corner

GORILLA MONSOON



anywhere from \$25 to \$100. Wrestlers usually do not have to put up entrance money for matches, unless it is deemed so in the contract beforehand. In such matches as battle royals, where a lot of money is at stake for the winner, entrance fees are demanded. They usually run about \$500.

Wrestlers are self-employed, independent contractors, therefore each man makes his own rules, whether he wants to work under a percentage, a guarantee or a flat fee. Most wrestlers work on a percentage of the gross receipts for the evening. In fact, it's the only professional sport I know where a man goes to work and has no idea of how much money he will make that night.

Gorilla Fan Club?

Dear Gorilla:

Do you have a fan club? If so could you give me some information on how to join. How many masked wrestlers are there and who is the most famous?

*Tony Gargano
Philadelphia*

To the best of my knowledge I don't have a fan club, per se. I have a great many fans but I never got into, or involved with, a specific fan club.

There are approximately 25 men today working professionally who wear masks. The man with the greatest reputation making the most money, of course, is Mil Mascaras.

Patera will have to answer for his sins

Let's start this week's column by rehashing the surprise ending of last Saturday's main event at the Spectrum.

After 20 minutes of action, officiated by yours truly, during which time either man could have won the bout, Bob Backlund seemed to have the upper hand on Ken Patera. At one point, Patera was thrown over the top rope and landed on Dick Graham, the PRISM broadcaster. Patera came off the arena floor with a microphone stand and as I tried to prevent him from bringing it into the ring, he calmly whacked me over the head with it.

I was almost knocked unconscious and when I finally made it to my feet I called for the bell disqualifying Patera for unsportsmanlike conduct.

Spectrum promoter Phil Zacko was waiting in my dressing room with a contract for me to meet Patera on Aug. 23.

Incidentally, Pedro Morales, who made a triumphant return as he pinned Samoan No. 1, was taken to a local hospital with a severe gash in his left leg received when he fell against a monitor at ringside.

Let's go to the mailbag:

Dear Gorilla:

How often does Bob Backlund defend his title? Does he receive an annual salary? Where does he wrestle besides the Spectrum?

Michael Gatter
Philadelphia

Backlund must defend his title once every 30 days to be in accordance with WWF rules. He's so

In this corner
GORILLA MONSOON



busy, however, he defends the title three times every month. His salary is determined by gross receipts at the arena. He works on a percentage. Backlund has defended his title throughout the U.S., Japan, Australia, Canada and South America.

Dear Gorilla:

I'm having a bit of a problem. I have been calling around the various YMCAs to find out if they would have knowledge of any kind of women's wrestling. I like the sport very much. Could you help me?

Linda McCrory
Philadelphia

Please drop a note to Wrestling Associates, P.O. Box 877 Willingboro, N.J. 08146.

In this corner

GORILLA MONSOON

If I lose I'll quit

There will be a co-feature at the Aug. 23 Spectrum card that is of special interest to me because I'm a part of it. That Saturday in August will be my opportunity to get my pound of flesh from Ken Patera, the Olympic strongman with the dirty tactics.

I have made it publicly known that if Patera can pin me or make me submit with his swinging neckbreaker it will terminate my career as a professional wrestler. Don't look for any wrestling holds in this particular bout because it's going to be a brawl. If I had my way there wouldn't even be a referee in this match. Just let us have at it and the man who can leave the ring under his own power would be declared the winner.

The other half of the co-feature will be a return Texas Death match between Ivan Putski and Larry Zbysko.

As I promised last week, here's



Who am I?

the complete card headed for the Spectrum Aug. 23:

Jose Estrada will face Rick McGraw; Baron Sciculna meets Johnny Rodz; Tor Kamata vs. Rene Goulet; incredible Hulk Hogan will face former Intercontinental champion Pat Patterson; outrageous Capt. Lou Albano will put on the wrestling tights as he joins Samoan No. 1 against Pedro Morales and Andre the Giant.

Now to a special contest. Here's a photo of a world class wrestler who has appeared in the World Wrestling Federation. The first 10 letters with the earliest postmarks and the correct identity will each receive a pair of tickets for the Aug. 23 card at the Spectrum. Deadline is Aug. 15. This contest is being made possible through the efforts of Spectrum promoter Phil Zacko. Please be sure to have legible return addresses so we can send you your tickets.

Let's flee to the mailbag.

Where's the Wizard?

Dear Gorilla:

The Grand Wizard is the manager of Ken Patera. Does he manage the wrestling careers of other pro wrestlers? Why doesn't he make an appearance at the Spectrum?

Bob Hayes
Philadelphia

The Grand Wizard manages a great many professional wrestlers. I believe at the present time he has a stable of eight. The two men who are currently wrestling in the WWF are, of course, Ken Patera and Sgt. Slaughter. The Grand Wizard is a very intelligent, very meek, very cowardly individual and

knows that a personal appearance at a live arena program would put him in danger of bodily harm, so he makes himself scarce, although on many occasions I have seen him in the press box filming and watching matches of future opponents.

About those rules ...

Dear Gorilla:

I have a couple of questions for you to answer. The first one is, watching referee Dick Woerle I have noticed two sets of rules being used. At one time when two men are wrestling outside the ring, and the one returns, he directs him to a neutral corner and starts the count over again. However, recently on television matches he has counted one time and when a wrestler returns to the ring, continues the count and never restarts for the other one. What is the official rule regarding that? Secondly, the wrestling programs that we see on television every week, where do they take place?

Gerald Winsteiger
Douglassville

The wrestling rules are quite specific as far as counting a wrestler out of the ring. There's a 10-count on the apron and a 20-count on the arena floor. If one man is outside the ring and another man should leave the ring and go after him then a new count would begin on both wrestlers. When one wrestler of the pair returns to the ring an additional new count would begin on the wrestler remaining outside.

The television tapings take place in Allentown in Agricultural Hall on the Fairgrounds and also in the Hamburg Fieldhouse in Hamburg.

In this corner

GORILLA MONSOON



Rick McGraw wins respect

Our current contest is a real success and the response has been incredible. Maybe I can persuade promoter Phil Zacko to have another one in the near future. Unfortunately, there can only be 10 winners. If it were up to me, you'd all be winners.

The following people guessed the portly wrestler pictured in last week's Journal as being me. You're right and I'm going to give each of you a pair of tickets to our next Spectrum match:

Ray Malone, Philadelphia; John Potts, Philadelphia; Dave Dadsworth, Malvern; Michael Amodei, Philadelphia; H. Myerson, Philadelphia; Irv Brockington, Philadelphia; Frank Cavalier, Philadelphia; Mike Hutnan, Pennsauken, N.J.; Charles DeLuzio, Norristown; Janelle Scherbik, Trenton, N.J.

* * *

Today's Personality Profile is on Rick McGraw. Upon graduating high school in Charlotte, N.C., Rick was awarded a scholarship to Elon College (N.C.). It was there that McGraw excelled in football and compiled a tremendous record in wrestling — 60 wins, two losses and one tie.

In 1973, Rick was the North Carolina state champion in the 185-pound weight class. Because of his outstanding amateur background, he was a target for professional promoters and eventually got his start in Tampa, Fla. in 1975 under the watchful eye of former national champion Jack Brisco.

Rick made the transition from amateur to pro without much

difficulty. With five years experience under his belt, Rick felt he was ready to try the Worldwide Wrestling Federation where he knew all the top names in wrestling could be found and in just a few months, Rick has earned the respect of East Coast fans.

Rick uses a diversified program of body building and weight training. Unfortunately, this doesn't leave him much time to do what he loves most — coaching amateur wrestling. Rick's current goal is to find a partner who can compliment his style of wrestling and take a shot at the World Tag Team championship.

From where I sit, Rick certainly has the tools and determination to achieve his goal.

Now to the mailbag.

Wrestling managers

Dear Gorilla:

Can you name a few managers of pro wrestlers who were once successful wrestlers themselves?

Gina Mullen
Philadelphia

Fabulous Fred Blassie, the *Fashion Plate* of wrestling, had a very successful career as a pro wrestler spanning two decades. He was the U.S. Heavyweight champion, California state champion and Brass Knuckles champion. Also, Capt. Lou Albano spent 22 years as a pro before turning manager. He had the distinction of being co-holder of the world tag team championship which he and Tony Altomare won in Comisky Park, Chicago in 1961. Finally there is the legendary Wild Red Berry, light-heavy champ of the world for 11 years and one of the greatest all-time managers in the history of wrestling.

Still friends?

Dear Gorilla:

Does Andre the Giant hold any championship belts? Is Tony Garea still Larry Zybynsko's best friends after Larry's tactics?

Joe Davish
Philadelphia

First of all, to the best of my knowledge, the only title held by Andre the Giant is European Heavyweight Champion. And if he doesn't get back to Europe in next 20 days to defend it, he'll have to forfeit it. Tony Garea and Larry Zybynsko, as of 10 days ago, are no longer on speaking terms. Garea came back to this area to question Zybynsko about his tactics and was attacked by Larry. Tony has vowed to get even. Although they were at one time the tag team champions, there will undoubtedly be a bitter feud between these two individuals.

In this corner

GORILLA MONSOON

I'm facing big decision

My entire 21 years of professional wrestling will be on the line Saturday at the Spectrum when I meet Olympic strongman Ken Patera. As I've said previously, if Patera manages to get a pin or submission on me I'll quit.

But this is a double edged sword.

Should I defeat Patera and become the new Intercontinental champion could I withstand the grinding schedule of commitments as a titleholder?

I've been knocked around in the squared circle for 21 years and I can honestly say I don't enjoy it any more. There comes a time when a man has to know his limitations and I think I'm intelligent enough to know mine.



Journal photo by Mike Levin
Monsoon checks Samoan's dental work.

Well, everything's academic until Saturday, and, while it is the most important to me personally, my match is not the only important one on the Spectrum bill.

The return Texas Death Match between Ivan Putski and Larry Zbysko should once and for all show the fans whom the better man is because the referee's only role in this match will be to raise the hand of the winner.

There are two other outstanding bouts on the card that could easily be main events. The Samoans will have their work cut out for them as they meet Pedro Morales and Andre the Giant, and, Hulk Hogan, although he has a much smaller opponent in Pat Patterson, will certainly find the Spectrum a rough place to be this coming Saturday night.

Now to the mailbag.

Dear Gorilla:

It seems obvious that no one can beat Andre the Giant (size being a main reason). Why doesn't Andre fight Bob Backlund for the title? Who do you think can give Andre the Giant a good fight and possibly beat him in the ring?

William Burns
Philadelphia

First of all, Andre the Giant does not fulfill the correct amount of bookings in the proper locations which would deem him No. 1 challenger in the eyes of the WWF. That is why he is not given a title shot. I feel that there are a number of individuals in pro wrestling today who certainly could give Andre a rough time in the ring, those individuals being Ken Patera, Hulk Hogan, Bob Backlund and Sergeant Slaughter.

Dear Gorilla:

Is it true that the midget mat star Butch Cassidy was killed in a gun accident? Also is it true that Bruno Sammartino's son, David, is wrestling in Texas and will be coming to the WWF?

Tory Gargano
Philadelphia

Question No. 1: To the best of my knowledge there has not been a midget wrestler involved in a gun accident. I'm sure I would have heard it along the line somewhere. And No. 2, David Sammartino, I'm sure, would love to follow in his father's footsteps and become a great professional wrestler but I cannot honestly confirm or deny that he has wrestled in the Texas area. I do know he has been in serious training for a couple years.

A chat with Bruno

While this reporter was in Pittsburgh last week, I had the opportunity to have lunch with the living legend, Bruno Sammartino, and got this exclusive interview.

Gorilla: What was your physical condition for your last Spectrum match?

Bruno: When I entered the ring at the Spectrum (Nov. 8), it was my first appearance in two and a half months. That's a long time to be out of the squared circle. I was all right, because I still run five miles three times a week. The thing I was most concerned about was timing, because Ken Patera is not only strong, but as quick and as agile as a cat.

Gorilla: I watched your match from beginning to end and it wasn't apparent to me that you had lost any of your ring ability. However, knowing how powerful Patera is, what made you start the match by testing his strength?

Bruno: Over the years, upper body strength has always been one of my strong points. I thought if I could demoralize Patera in that respect, it would make other things easier. Ken appeared to have some kind of shoulder problem early in the match, but I found out later he was really hiding a knee injury.

Gorilla: At what point during the match did you feel you had control and were on your way to victory?

Bruno: When Patera started resorting to the punches and kicks, I knew he was getting desperate. The real telltale move was when he left the ring of his own accord.

Gorilla: Being a ring veteran and knowing the hazards of going outside the squared circle, what made you chase Patera?

Bruno: I know what kind of snake Patera is. And he knew his title was in jeopardy. So a count outside of the ring would cost him the match. Little did I know he would resort to using a steel ringside chair on me. My neck and shoulder still hurt.

Gorilla: Knowing what he had done, and how enraged you are over his actions,

In this corner

GORILLA MONSOON



what do you think made him sign a contract agreeing to a return match?

Bruno: Ken Patera has many faults, but he is not stupid. We

background and great conditioning makes him an outstanding referee.

Below: Largo, Md. 11/22/80



KEN PATERA

...rematch with Bruno ...

are all in this profession to make money, and Ken knows he can make money wrestling me (Dec. 13 at the Spectrum). I'm glad he feels that way because I have a score to settle with him. What better place to do this than my second home, Philadelphia. During my many years in the ring, Philly fans by far have been my favorites.

Now to the mail bag.

Dear Gorilla:

Do wrestling referees receive any kind of specialized training? Do they work on a part-time basis? How long has Dick Woehrle been a referee?

George Wells

Dear George:

All referees are appointed by state athletic commissions. Unfortunately, in many cases, they leave a lot to be desired. Too many of them don't know a wrist lock from a wrist watch. I don't know of any required schooling for them other than to know the state rules. Refereeing is usually a secondary form of income. I don't know of any referees who do it full-time.

Dick Woehrle is in my opinion one of the most effective referees in the entire country. Dick has been a referee since the late 50s and all that experience along with his athletic

My career is over

It is with a great deal of deliberation and conscience searching that I have made the following decision.

I have made my final appearance as a professional wrestler in the Spectrum, and when I have completed another three already contracted bouts I will hang up the wrestling tights forever, ending a 21-year career.

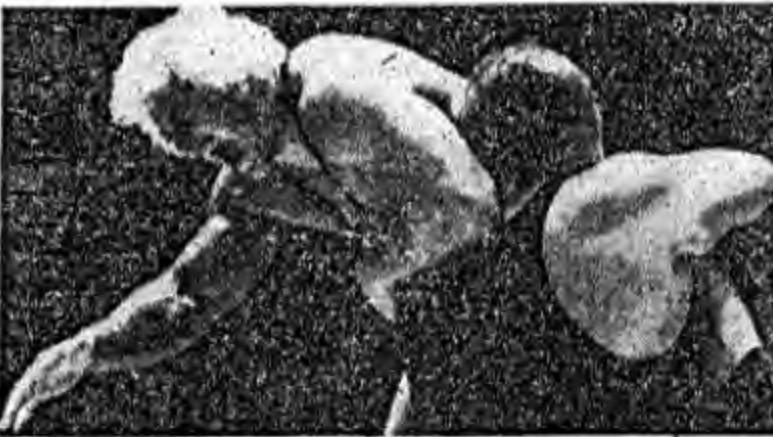
I made the statement that if Patera beat me I would retire. However, I don't feel that Patera won a clean-cut victory over me last Saturday because he used some kind of foreign object, probably brass knuckles, to obtain this victory.

Patera getting the victory over me in this manner was not necessarily what makes me hang it up. Rather, what happened during the match is what made my mind up for me.

From the opening bell, and for the next 10 minutes, I used everything in my arsenal trying to dethrone Patera. Although hurt and stunned, Patera somehow managed to weather the storm. There isn't anything else I know of that I might have tried. So I figure I don't have in my attack anymore what it takes to beat a man of the ability of a Ken Patera.

On Sunday morning following

the match, I was a mass of bruises and soreness. The full-nelson used on me by Patera should definitely be banned by the World Wrestling Federation.



Journal photo by Mike Levin

Gorilla Monsoon has the upper hand here but Ken Patera ended up the winner in this Saturday night match at the Spectrum. The loss convinced Monsoon to retire from professional wrestling after a distinguished 21-year career.

There was a time when Ken Patera was held in high esteem by Yours Truly, as he was one of the greatest amateur athletes ever produced by this country.

National hero

He was a national hero and could easily have carried this image over into professional wrestling and given today's youth a true, bona fide hero to look up to. Unfortunately, Pa-

ter met the Grand Wizard who poisoned his already sick mind and made him the hated, despised and underhanded snake that he is today.

What's left in the future for Gorilla Monsoon?

I don't ever think I'll leave the realm of pro wrestling. I have been doing public relations work for Capitol Wrestling for some time and will continue to do so.

Writing, managing

I will always look forward to writing my column in Philly's best sports paper, the Journal.

I have, at the present time, several wrestlers I'm managing and have offered every week to take on new talent. So I'm sure I'll have plenty to do. I will also be happy to have more time to spend with my family and be

able to make more of the personal appearances I've had to turn down in the past.

Only time will tell how much I will miss the action and excitement of the squared circle. I take with me some lovely memories and horrible nightmares.

But I hope I have, over the past 21 years, brought some joy and entertainment to wrestling fans. I leave the ring with no regrets.

* * *

On Saturday, Sept. 6, Yours Truly will be assisting the American Red Cross in its annual Save-A-Life Saturday. I will be on hand at 10:30 a.m. at the Center City Holiday Inn (18th & Market) giving away autographed pictures and answering any questions from my fans. So come on down.



Is it fat, or muscle? "I'm sure I'm carrying 40 or 50 pounds of extra weight. But most of my tissue is muscle. I have picked up, off the floor, in excess of 1,500 pounds in dead weight. When the adrenaline is pumping, there's no telling how powerful I am. I have to be very careful. I'm sure I could literally snuff the life out of an individual with my hands. It's that easy."

Has a doctor ever suggested he diet? "No. My blood pressure is never over 130 over 80. If you are in physical condition I believe you can carry a lot of extra body weight. Besides, I'm not carrying that much extra," he contends. "A few months ago I went to the hospital for a knee injury. They took X-rays and an old doctor said in 40 years he had never seen a man with my skeletal structure. He said my skeleton has to weigh between 150 and 190 pounds, very heavy boned. He even asked me if I'd be willing to donate my body to science," he laughs. "No, I'm not ready for that yet."

"My mother did not name me Gorilla. That name was given to me by a promoter. Up to a few years ago, when somebody asked my name, far as I was concerned I was Gorilla Monsoon. At that time I was reluctant to be known as anything else, business-wise. Oh, yes, my wife was called Mrs. Gorilla, Mrs. Monsoon, oh, yes." For 20 years he's been married to a woman who weighs 130 pounds. They met at a birthday party, during a seven-year stretch when he was a mute Manchurian.

Top of this page: conclusion of excerpt beginning on preceding page; Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 9/21/80

But it's easy to see why his promoter did. Inside the ring, Gorilla Monsoon does more than just look mean.

"At that time I was Gorilla Monsoon, Manchurian Giant," he recalls. "My manager did my talking for me. I never said anything, I just stood there. So fans more or less took it for granted, here's a guy from Manchuria who doesn't speak any English, maybe doesn't speak, period. I think it was even mentioned I was a deaf mute. Well, guys at this party were making fun of me in a kidding way, derogatory remarks out loud, here's a big guy doesn't know anything, big dummy can't hear, can't speak, the usual ribbing remarks. And Maureen got very upset. One thing led to another, she became Mrs. Gorilla."

And now we drop the mask. His real name is Robert Morella, but you can call him Gino. He's proud of being a professional athlete. He defends the decency of his sport. He's graceful, coordinated, agile. He can jog 10 miles without huffing. He's a college graduate, a licensed physical therapist, an ex-teacher (English, science, biology) who loves kids. He has three of his own and lives in Willingboro. He wears a huge gold crucifix and uses words like

resound, transpire, preclude, adage. He just looks mean.

In 5,000 bouts over 21 years, he's been a good guy, and he's been a bad guy. "When I started, I figured it would be to my advantage to take as many shortcuts to the top where the big money is," he says. And when he was bad, it was horrid. "I was knifed, beaned, blackjacked, bottle-whipped, spat on, had cigars and cigarettes put out on my body, many riots, chairs busted over my head, concussions, contusions. Fans cursed my wife and threatened my kids, demolished my cars in parking lots. Rough."

The most dangerous part of a wrestler's life is going to and from the ring. "You get the 'well-wishers' who stick ballpoint pens in your eye, the little old funny ladies poking you with hat pins, making you get tetanus shots three or four times a month. You can't touch anybody out there because you'll end up in court. But if a guy gets so outraged that he leaves his seat and comes into the ring trying to get a piece of me, then he's mine," his eyes glaze.

The Wizard's a Grand manager without friends

I have received many letters asking me to do personality profiles on the managers of pro wrestlers. We did one several months ago on Capt. Lou Albano, and now here's the lowdown on The Grand Wizard.

The Grand Wizard is considered to be the senior manager of pro wrestling, having been doing his thing for the past 27 years. It's surprising to this writer that The Wiz has managed to survive that long because he is a short, skinny antagonist who will do whatever is necessary to insure victory for the men in his stable. I also know that he does carry some visible scars and a severe back condition which he received at the hands of men who could no longer restrain themselves.

The Wizard is a master at distracting a referee from his duties. His verbal assaults on his adversaries is unequalled and many of his victories are obtained because guys lose their cool. The Grand Wizard's greatest claim to fame has been the world title that his man, Superstar Billy Graham, literally stole from Bruno Sammartino in the Baltimore Civic Center.

The Wizard's large stable affords him a better than average life. He owns summer and winter homes, buys a new Cadillac every year, and in general lives a first class life. The only department he's short in would be friends. Even many of his own men despise him, but they stay with him because they know he has the potential to make champions. He currently manages the Intercontinental champion Ken Patera, but that title may be short lived because Patera will meet Andre the Giant at the Spectrum Oct. 11.

Professional wrestling has been good to The Grand Wizard.

In this corner

GORILLA MONSOON



Ken Patera, being mauled by Bob Backlund, should have been suspended for hitting Gorilla with a microphone. So says Gorilla Monsoon, the referee that night.

I wish I could say The Grand Wizard has been good to professional wrestling.

* * *

Now to the mailbag.
Dear Gorilla:

You have been in wrestling over 20 years. What kind of money did wrestlers make 20 years ago?

Bill McConnell
Philadelphia

When I first started as a professional wrestler I was approached by Toronto Maple Leaf Gardens promoter Frank Tunney and guaranteed a starting wage of \$500 a week. At that time I was teaching school and that certainly far surpassed the teachers' salaries of 1959, so it really wasn't any great de-

cision for me to make. But I did promise myself that if I were not earning \$40,000 a year by my third year as a pro that I was in the wrong business.

Obviously I have made that kind of money and more over the years. Professional wrestling has been extremely good to me.

Dear Gorilla:

Shouldn't Ken Patera be fined and suspended for hitting you over the head with the microphone stand at the Spectrum? I think he should be.

How come on TV Vince McMahon keeps on saying Hulk Hogan is undefeated when he lost to Bob Backlund and Andre the Giant?

Kevin Jackson
Newark, Del.

Ken Patera did receive a fine from the Pennsylvania State Athletic Commission and obviously should have been suspended pending a hearing. Unfortunately that was not done. It seems to me that the more you let fellows like Ken Patera get away with these type of tactics the more they will continue to use them and the only real way to hurt these men is to hit them in the pocketbook because that's why they're in professional wrestling, to make money.

I'm sure that you are misquoting Vince McMahon Jr. Every time I've heard him refer to Hulk Hogan as an undefeated wrestler it has applied to television wrestling. There are very few undefeated wrestlers in the world today. In fact, I don't know of any.

I want to start this week's column by thanking Tom Moran of WIP and Barbara Kalik, assemblywoman of New Jersey, for their kind words and generous gifts on my retirement Saturday night at the Spectrum. I will cherish them always.

Promoter Phil Zacko informs me that the next card at the Spectrum on Sat., Nov. 8, will feature a special return match between Bob Backlund and Larry Zbysko with special guest referee Tony Garea. Also a real treat on the card will be the return of the living legend, Bruno Sammartino, as he takes on Olympic strongman Ken Patera.

We'll have the complete card for you next week and also next week's column will feature a new "Name The Wrestler" contest with a fantastic prize to the winner, but you'll just have to sit tight until next week for all the details.

Where's David?

Dear Gorilla:

In response to a recent question in your column — David Sammartino did wrestle in a tag team match with his father, Bruno, in Amarillo, Tex., Feb. 21 of this year. I do not know, however, if he is wrestling on a regular basis.

Also in response to another recent question inquiring whether there are any wrestling schools in the Northeast United States — former wrestler Killer Kowalski has a co-ed pro wrestling school in Reading, Mass.

Bruno's No. 1 Fan,
Bob Langnas
Philadelphia

Bruno returning to Spectrum mats



Journal photo by Mike Levin

A fan begs Gorilla Monsoon, here demolishing Samoan No. 1, to forget about his retirement and return to the squared circle.

In this corner

GORILLA MONSOON



A — David is definitely not wrestling on a regular basis. Not at this time.

Don't retire

Dear Gorilla,

I've been a fan of yours since I was eight years old, and have seen you win a good many matches. Why quit? Patera's nothing but a bum. Don't retire because of him.

I also wanted to ask how to break into this sport.

Thank you
J. Willis
Shamokin, Pa.

A — Ken Patera was not the determining factor in my retirement. I felt that I have paid my dues over 21 years as a participant and because of some of the serious nature of my injuries I did not want to, in this point of time in my life, get any more serious injuries that might mame me in the future.

As for your second point, there is literally no way for an inexperienced wrestler to gain entry into the World Wrestling Federation as they only accept experienced fellows and you cannot approach them anyway.

Professional wrestling returned to Rochester after a four year absence on Saturday night at the War Memorial. A crowd of 5,000 fans was on hand to see former World Wrestling Federation heavyweight champion Pedro Morales declared the winner in 12:10 over Ken Patera, who retained his Intercontinental Title since the belt can only change hands by pin or sub-

mission and in this match, Patera lost when he was counted out of the ring.

Longtime area favorite Dominic DeNucci was pinned by newcomer Sgt. Slaughter after 10:19 of the semi-final. Tony Garea was the victor over Larry Zbysko at 18:10 of the special event when Zbysko was dis-

qualified for choking Garea from outside the ropes and refusing to break the hold.

In an added attraction, The Hangman pinned muscular Rick McGraw in 12:50 while Maravilla was the winner by count-out at 11:35 over Johnny Rodz and in the opener, Steve King and Angelo Gomes struggled 20 minutes to a draw.

Next program will be on Monday night, Jan. 19 at the War Memorial.

Wrestling Provides Excitement Galore

Some tag team nostalgia

Since we've just completed a tag team elimination tournament to crown new champions for the belts forfeited by Backlund and Morales let's take time to review tag team wrestling.

Backlund and Morales, as you know, won the title from the Samoans in Shea Stadium, Aug. 9. It would have been impossible for Backlund, as the world champion, to fulfill the commitments necessary to be tag team champ, and, Morales was delighted to get rid of the title because he's shooting for the world title. Both men, therefore, agreed to surrender the belts immediately after winning them.

Thus, the belts were up for grabs and an elimination tournament was held.

Marvin Sigel, a wrestling promoter from Houston, was the first man to ever put four wrestlers in the ring at the same time in 1937. However, this method caused numerous injuries and mass confusion until 1939 when rules came into effect allowing only one member of a team to be in the ring while his partner stood on the apron holding a tag rope and was allowed to enter the ring only after being tagged by hand by his partner.

During the early '40s and '50s many tag teams consisted of brothers such as Babe and Chris Zaharias, the Dusek Brothers, and the Bockwinkles, Nick and Warren. Many top tag partners, however, were not brothers. Killer Kowalski and Hans Herman, Pat O'Connor and Vern Gagne, Buddy Rogers and the Great Scott, Mr. Moto and the Great Togo were just some of the great teams back in the early

days of tag team wrestling.

The World Wrestling Federation has had some outstanding tag team champions such as Professor Tanaka and Mr. Fugi, who held the title off and on from 1973 to 1977 and yours truly, who was a co-holder of the world's tag team title with a number of different partners, most famous of all, Killer Kowalski. Probably the most exciting tag team combination over the past 30 years was the Fabulous Kangaroos. The Infamous Grahams left their mark on tag team history, and four brothers combined to do this, Eddie, Dr. Jerry, Crazy Luke and the youngest, Superstar Billy.

One of the most unique tag team matches in history took place in Madison Square Garden Jan. 23, 1978. It was a special eight-man elimination tag. The idea came from the Garden promoter Vince McMahon Sr.

The match consisted of two teams, each with four members, and as a man was beaten he had to leave the ring. Team No. 1 consisted of Bob Backlund, Tony Garea, Larry Zbysko and High Chief Peter Maivia. Team No. 2 consisted of Professor Tanaka, Mr. Fugi, Stan Stasiak and Baron Sciciliano. This was one of Backlund's greatest nights in pro wrestling, for after all of his partners had been eliminated and one member of the opposition, Backlund defeated all three remaining opponents singlehand-



Journal photo by Mike Levin

Bob Backlund, left, gets caught from behind by Hulk Hogan.

edly.

It would take a year of this column to complete the tag team story, so I hope I've whet your appetite and we'll touch on this subject again.

* * *

Now, to the letters.

Dear Gorilla:

I recently read an article in a local newspaper that you became a hero "overnight" by coming to the aid of Bruno Sammartino. Please tell us what happened that night. I also read that Billy Graham had surgery for the removal of tumors from his vertebra.

David Kerstetter
Brenton, N.J.

In this corner

GORILLA MONSOON



Shortly after my manager, Wild Red Berry passed away, I wasn't quite sure which direction to pursue. I had made many friends and many enemies along the road of professional wrestling and one Saturday afternoon at Channel 48's studio wrestling I went to the aid of Bruno Sammartino who was about to be clobbered from the blind side by Dr. Jerry Graham using a 4-by-4 that he had found in the studio.

PHILADELPHIA JOURNAL/

Wednesday, September 17, 1980

Gorilla's 'night' touches his heart

I'm certainly looking forward to this Saturday because the Spectrum is making this night a commemoration of my retirement.

The first 10,000 fans will each receive an eight-by-10 photo of me, WIP radio personality Tom Moran will be presenting me with a trophy and, in addition, Assemblywoman Barbara Kalic from New Jersey will make a presentation from the New Jersey Assembly.

I want to thank the thousand of fans who have made my 21 years as a pro some of the best years of my life. I owe it all to the fans, for without them pro sports could not exist.

I would, at this time, like to congratulate Dallas Green and the Phillies on their division title and I want to go on record as stating I know that the Phillies can bring the world championship to Philadelphia.

We haven't, in the past few weeks, talked too much about the bouts this Saturday at the Spectrum, so let's take a closer look.

Larry Zbysko, the No. 1 challenger for Bob Backlund's crown, is extremely confident and states he has mastered the secret of how to get Backlund's belt. I'm sure Bob Backlund will have a great deal to say

In this corner

GORILLA MONSOON

about that.

Olympic strongman Ken Patera could easily find his Intercontinental championship fly out the door of the Spectrum as he meets the one and only Andre the Giant. I can guarantee there won't be anyone going for popcorn when that match enters the ring.

The newly-crowned tag team champions, the Samoans, will see individual competition as No. 1 meets Pedro Morales and No. 2 meets Tony Garea. The undefeated Hangman will try to solve the moves of Rene Goulet and three other bouts will round out the card.

Now to the mailbag:

Dear Mr. Monsoon:

I have just arrived in Philadelphia. I am a 33-year-old married female. Where I had lived before, I was slightly involved in women's wrestling. I have been calling all over the city to find out if I could continue my involvement in some way. No dice. I have received no help, or information.

I enjoy wrestling and would like to be involved in the learning process. I am a novice. Please, if you could supply any information, I

would be most appreciative.

Linda McCrorey

Philadelphia

You obviously have been seeking information through the wrong channels because we are always willing and able to help someone such as you. If you would kindly drop me a note at Wrestling Associates, we'll definitely try to help you.

Dear Gorilla:

Have any of the wrestlers who perform at the Spectrum ever participated in the Summer Olympics before becoming professionals?

William Gatter

Philadelphia

I don't believe that anyone currently in the World Wrestling Federation has appeared in any Olympic games. However, there are many men with Olympic backgrounds in wrestling who are currently wrestling today.

If you would care to drop me a line at our new mailing address I would be glad to list for you the pro wrestlers of yesterday who were the great amateur and collegiate wrestlers of yesterday. Every man who is involved in professional wrestling has an amateur background, but only a handful have made it to the Olympics.





Bruno Sammartino, center, has his hands raised in victory after defeating Buddy Rogers for the WWF championship at Madison Square Garden, May 17, 1963.

We have a winner

I want to begin by saying the response to our new contest has been great. However, I am somewhat amazed at the number of incorrect answers.

I didn't think I was using too difficult a photo, as the mystery man was co-holder of the World Tag Team title with partner Rene Goulet in December, 1971. However, we have a winner, Joseph DeRenzis of Camden who identified Karl Gotch.

Joe, congratulations, and you'll be hearing from me soon.

We have some interesting things to discuss about the Nov. 8 Spectrum card, not the least of which is that three titles are at stake. It is my opinion that at least two titles will change hands that night.

Ken Patera has made some derogatory personal remarks publicly about Bruno Sammartino, and when I spoke to Bruno yesterday he said he will attempt to permanently eliminate Patera from pro wrestling. Bruno could very likely be crowned the New Intercontinental Champion that night.

In the tag team title match between the Samoans and Tony Garea and Rick Martel, my choice is Martel and Garea. There is dissension and animosity between the Samoans and manager Lou Albano and I

In this corner

GORILLA MONSCHOOL



don't feel they will be entering the ring with the continuity necessary to hold off the likes of Garea and Martel. It doesn't look good for the Samoans.

The return title defense between Bob Backlund and Larry Zybyzko with the guest referee Tony Atlas makes for another possible title change as anything can happen when a guest referee is involved.

Now to the mailbag.

Dear Gorilla,

Bob Backlund won the WWF title from Billy Graham, who had defeated Bruno Sammartino for the belt. Who did Bruno defeat for the title and how long did Bruno hold the title?

*Robbie Bell
Philadelphia*

Dear Robbie,

The simple answer to your question is Stan Stasiak but let's trace the title back anyway. Bruno first won the WWF title from Buddy Rogers in the old Madison Square Garden May 17, 1963. Bruno held the title the next 7½ years,

until dropping it to the "Russin Bear" Ivan Koloff on Jan. 18, 1971. Koloff's reign was short-lived as he was dethroned by Pedro Morales one month later. Morales held the belt for two years and one of his outstanding defenses of the title was against Bruno, which ended in a one-hour draw.

Morales lost his belt right here in Philadelphia to Stan "The Man" Stasiak Dec. 1, 1973. Stasiak's reign proved to be the shortest in wrestling history as it lasted only nine days. On Dec. 10, 1973 Stasiak faced the living legend Sammartino in Madison Square Garden and lost his belt.

Bruno reigned for another 3½ years and in the Baltimore Civic Arena on April 30, 1977 he was stripped of the title by Billy Graham. Of the 19,000 who witnessed Graham using the ring ropes for leverage to hold Bruno down, one man did not see it. Unfortunately for Bruno, it was the referee.

PHILADELPHIA JOURNAL/

Wednesday, October 29, 1980

The fact remains that no one has ever accomplished what Bruno Sammartino has in the history of pro wrestling and I don't believe anyone ever will. History will remember him as the greatest champion of all.

Pro wrestlers visit in New Jersey, too

I want to take this opportunity to thank all the fans who came down to the Deptford Mall last Saturday for the wrestling demonstration. I know I answered a lot of questions and I hope everyone had a good time.

I have received many letters from our Jersey fans wanting to know where pro bouts are held in the Garden State. There are numerous locations, so I'll name some of the upcoming ones:

Nov. 21, Belleville, N.J., Belleville High School; Nov. 24, Spotswood, N.J., Spotswood High School; Dec. 4, Wrightstown, N.J., Fort Dix Sports Arena; Dec. 5, Bricktown, N.J., Lake Rivera Middle School; Dec. 15, Atlantic City, Convention Hall.

Incidentally, any groups wishing to use pro wrestling as a fundraiser can apply on the group's letterhead to Wrestling Associates, P.O. Box 877, Willingboro, N.J. 08046.

Meanwhile, don't forget we're only a few days away from the super card of wrestling at the Spectrum this Saturday, marking the return of Bruno Sammartino.

Now, I'm going to devote the remainder of this column to answering the mail which is really piling up. Don't forget, all questions used in the column receive a pair of tickets for the upcoming cards at the Spectrum.

Dear Gorilla:

I would like to know if Antonio Inoki will be returning to the WWF soon?

Robert Guijano

Dear Bob:

Antonio Inoki, being a world-class wrestler, tries to get as many world-wide bookings as he can. However, he only manages to get to the U.S. about once a year, and that's usually for a West Coast appearance. Maybe we'll see him in 1981.

Dear Gorilla:

How long will Bob Backland be in the Orient? I read in your column where you won't be wrestling anymore. How about putting your knowledge to

In this corner

GORILLA MONSOON



Stan Hanson, the man who broke Bruno Sammartino's neck, will be returning to the WWF area shortly.

work as a referee? We need a good referee. Why does the WWF use different ring sizes?

Brian Shaffer

Dear Brian:

Bob will be defending his title in Japan two times over a 10-day span. These will be some of his toughest title defenses because of the short time between matches. I am not too thrilled at the idea of refereeing, I do so only as a special request of the State Athletic Commission. There are a number of ring sizes that are legal here in the WWF, 22-feet, 20-feet, 18-feet and 16-feet. The size is really not that important because as the great Joe Louis once said, "You can run, but you can't hide."

Dear Gorilla:

Arnold Skaaland has been a

pro wrestler for over 30 years. Has he held any major championship titles in the U.S.?

Brian Bold

Dear Brian:

Arnold has been in pro wrestling for over 35 years and has wrestled some of the all-time greats including Jim Londas. Arnold today is known as the manager of champions. The Golden Boy had a very successful career. He held the title of Pacific Coast Heavyweight Champion, Southern States Heavyweight Champion and Canadian American Champion. He is the only wrestler who can boast of over 100 matches in Madison Square Garden without a defeat.

Dear Gorilla:

When a pro wrestler prepares himself for a champion-

PHILADELPHIA JOURNAL/

Wednesday, November 5, 1980

ship match, what type of training is involved? How do the techniques for wrestlers compare with those of pro boxers?

Ann Murry

Dear Ann:

Pro wrestlers are in constant training. A wrestler, just as a boxer, trains according to who his opponent is. Sometimes speed will give you a decided advantage and sometimes strength will give you the edge. However, there can be no substitute for experience and knowledge. A truism in pro wrestling is that a good little man never ever beat a good big man. The bottom line is that boxers and wrestlers train much in the same manner.

Samoans took a licking

The hated Wild Samoans were stripped of their WWF tag team championship belts Saturday night when the dynamic newly-formed team of Tony Garea and Rick Martel outclassed them in the Spectrum's squared circle.

The Samoans' manager, Captain Lou Albano, wasted no time in demanding a return match and promoter Phil Zacko contracted the return for the Spectrum Saturday, Dec. 13, which will be a special Christmas show starting at 1:45 p.m.

Also Saturday, a wounded and angry Bruno Sammartino demanded a return match with the ruthless Ken Patera after the Olympic strongman lost his composure and resorted to using a ringside chair to batter

In this corner

GORILLA MONSOON



TONY GAREA

Bruno. Zacko got Patera's signature on the contract and that match, too, will appear Dec. 13.

I'll have the complete Dec. 13 card for you next week. Now to the mailbag:

Dear Gorilla:

I would like to know if there is a wrestling Hall of Fame? And if not, why not? I feel that you have done a great deal for the sport of pro wrestling, and though you may be retired, the name Gorilla Monsoon will



RICK MARTEL

live on and on.

P.J. Verrecchio

Dear P.J.:

Thank you for the kind words. As to your question, to the best of my knowledge there is no Pro Wrestling Hall of Fame. I am going to speak to the powers that be and see if we can't get one started.

I want to publicly thank Keith Krepsle, outstanding tight end for the Eagles, for taking time from his busy schedule to meet some fans in a hospital.



In this corner

GORILLA MONSOON



Ernie Ladd arrives for Christmas

The appearance of Ernie Ladd, ex-Kansas City Chief football star and now self-proclaimed king of pro wrestling, highlights a special Christmas wrestling card at the Spectrum Dec. 13 (1:30 p.m.).

Ladd will have his hands full, as he tests former world champion Pedro Morales.

In other matches that day, unpredictable Johnny Rodz meets newcomer Rick Stalone; Jose Estrada squares off against Steve King; Captain Lou Albano's latest discovery, the outrageous Moondogs, will make their Spectrum debut against Rick McGraw and Angel Marvilia; undefeated Sargent Slaughter will be tested by veteran Dominic DeNucci; The Wild Samoans have vowed to regain their championship as they meet Tony Garea and Rick Martel in a return match; Larry Zybysko will try to grab a tiger by the tail when he meets Mr. U.S.A., Tony Atlas, in a grudge match.

And, in another battle between two competitors who won't be sharing the same Thanksgiving turkey, Olympian Ken Patera goes against Bruno Sammartino.

Tag team champs

Now, to the mailbag:

Dear Gorilla,

Being a devoted Journal reader, I'd like to compliment you on the fine wrestling information provided each Wednesday. I'd like you to list the World Wrestling Federation tag team title holders.

Thank you
Steve Vidas

Dear Steve

The list you have requested is as follows:

1971: Tarzan Tyler & Luke Graham; Karl Gotch & Rene Goulet.

1972: Curtis Iaukea & Baron Scicluna; Sonny King & Chief Jay Strongbow; Taro Tanaka & Mr. Fugi.

1973: Haystack Calhoun & Tony Garea; Taro Tanaka & Mr. Fugi; Tony Garea & Dean Ho.



TONY ATLAS

1974: Jim Valiant & John Valiant.

1975: Dominic DeNucci & Victor Rivera; Dominic DeNucci & Pat Barrett; Blackjack Mulligan & Jack Lanza; Louie Cerdan & Tony Parisi.

1976: The Masked Executioners.

1977: Prof. Tanaka & Mr. Fugi.

1978: Dino Bravo & Dominic DeNucci; The Yukon Lumberjacks; Tony Garea & Larry Zybysko.

1979: Jim Valiant & John

Valiant; Ivan Putski & Tito Santana.

1980: The Wild Samoans; Tony Garea & Rick Martel (current champions).

Women's titles

Dear Gorilla,

Is there any individual championship title for woman wrestlers, or do they only participate in tag team competition?

Nancy Bald

Dear Nancy

In the realm of women's wrestling there are two major titles at stake at this time

and they're the women's world title, which has been held by the Fabulous Moolah for the past 20 years, and the women's world tag team championship, which is currently held by Joyce Grable and Vicki Williams. Women wrestlers seem to be an endangered species since few have come on the scene in the past 10 years. The few still in competition are in great demand and have a vigorous schedule. I would like to predict that 1981 will see a new women's world champion crowned.

JAPANESE CONNECTION A TAG TEAM TO WATCH

Captain Lou Albano predicts his new tag team, the Japanese Connection of Mr. Fugi and Mr. Saito, will win the world championship Oct. 17 at the Spectrum.

Although the current champions, Tony Garea and Rick Martel, will have something to say about that, Albano knows of what he speaks. Albano has managed 11 world tag team champions, a feat never before accomplished in pro wrestling.

Here's what Captain Lou had to say in a recent exclusive interview.

Q: Because of your wild actions on television, many fans feel you're not playing with a full deck. Would you like to respond to that?

A: I'm not interested in what the fans feel because I'm a genius in the realm of pro wrestling managers, so who cares? When I go to the bank they don't ask me what my personality rating is.

Q: Of all the world tag team champions you have managed, who



Captain Lou Albano, center, manager of 11 World Champion tag teams says the Japanese Connection of Mr. Fugi, left, and Mr. Saito, will become the 12th.

GORILLA MONSOON



IN THIS CORNER

were the best combinations?

A: That's a very difficult question because all my teams were great. However, history will prove the Japanese Connection to be the greatest team I will ever manage.

Q: You have said many times publicly the team of Garea and Martel stole the title from your Moondogs. As someone who viewed the match I can't honestly see any truth to your statement.

A: They don't tag properly. They constantly distracted the referee, who obviously was on their side. As far as your seeing the bout Monsoon, everyone knows you're as blind as a bat. The films are on file if anyone cares to see them.

As usual, Captain Lou proved to be a fountain of misinformation. However, I do feel Fugi and Saito will be a team to watch.

Now to the mailbag.
Dear Gorilla,

Who does Bob Backlund think is most likely to take his title? Is there any way a team of Hulk Hogan and Andre the Giant will be formed?

*Kevin Jackson,
Newark, Del.*

Dear Kevin,

When I proposed your question to Bob his reply was, "At the present time there's no doubt in my mind that Murocco poses the great threat to my title. However, I have nightmares about a man, known well to the Delaware Valley fans, in which he leaves the ring with my belt around his waist, and that man is Ken Patera."

It's unlikely Andre the Giant would ever consent to having Hulk Hogan as his partner, mainly because he wouldn't be able to turn his back on his partner, let alone his opponent.

GORILLA MONSOON



IN THIS CORNER

BACKLUND'S TITLE ON LINE SATURDAY

Let's take one more look at the giant card of wrestling scheduled for Saturday at the Spectrum. Bob Backlund will defend his WWF heavyweight title against the Magnificent Murocco; Andre the Giant will go after Killer Kahn; George "The Animal" Steele will try to stop the sensational Mr. USA, Tony Atlas; former-world champ Pedro Morales will tackle King Kong Mosca; World Tag Team Champions Tony Garea and Rick Martel will be meeting Bulldog Brower and Larry Sharp; the Japanese Connection will face Johnny Rodz and Jose Estrada; S.D. Jones will trade head butts with big Ron Shaw; and Baron Scicluna will test Curt Henning.

It should be a show well worth seeing.

I receive letters every week requesting information on other cards being held in the Delaware Valley, so we'll take time to mention a few.

Tomorrow a great card is scheduled for Highland Park, N.J. at Highland Park High. Friday, the CYO in Trenton is hosting a star-studded card featuring the tag team champs, Garea and Martel. Monday, Oct. 26, wrestling returns to the Fort Dix Sports Arena. Those bouts, even though they're on the base, are open to the public. There's lots of parking and fantastic security.

Thursday, Oct. 29, the Asbury Park Convention Hall will host a card featuring a rare appearance by Captain Lou Albano.

And this special note: Pro wrestling will be back in Atlantic City

starting in November. The bouts will be held in the beautiful Superstar Theatre at Resorts International. I'll have more information for you as we get closer.

Now to the big contest.

I am looking for the answer to this question: How many matches did the "living legend" Bruno Sammartino have in his 22-year career?

The letter with the correct answer or closest answer will receive a pair of ringside season tickets for the 1982 Spectrum wrestling season.

All entries should be sent to: Wrestling Associates, P.O. Box 877, Willingboro, NJ 08046.

All entries must be received by Friday, Oct. 30. Good luck to everyone.



King Kong Mosca tries to make Pedro Morales part of the ringside furniture in a recent meeting. He'll be up to his old tricks when they meet again Saturday at the Spectrum.

GORILLA MONSOON

IN THIS CORNER STRETCHER MATCH COMING TO PHILLY

As promised last week, I have the complete card headed for the Spectrum Saturday, Nov. 14, and, hats are off once again to promoter Phil Zacko for arranging such a great one.

Let's start with the preliminaries and work up. Johnny Rodz will meet Terry Johnson; Baron Scicluna will face newcomer Joe Cox; Jose Estrada will battle the very capable Curt Henning; King Kong Mosca will try to get back on the winning track at the expense of ring veteran Dominic DeNucci; German powerhouse Hans Schroder takes on the fantastic Rick Martel; and Greg Valentine, the master of the figure four leg lock will have his hands full with sensational Tony Garea.

Then there will be a very tough tag team title defense by the new champions Mr. Fugi and Mr. Saito against the formidable team of Mr. USA Tony Atlas and Special Delivery Jones.

The next two bouts can only be classified as a double main event. For the first time in the Delaware Valley a sensational Mongolian Stretcher Match will be fought between Andre the Giant and Killer Kahn, and world champ Bob Backlund and Intercontinental champ the Magnificent Murocco will pick up where they left off last time after an hour-long draw.

There are literally no rules for this a Mongolian Stretcher Match, no count-outs, no disqualifications, no submissions and pin falls do not count. A man can only be declared a winner if his opponent has been carried from the ring on a stretcher.

Personal experience

Many years ago yours truly and Bruno Sammartino were signed to a similar type match, and now, on damp cold days, I am vividly

reminded of that tortured night. Bruno ended up with a broken ankle, broken nose and severe lacerations. I wasn't much better off, finishing with a broken shoulder, three cracked ribs and a severe concussion.

I hope they have a large enough stretcher to hold Andre, because this bout could definitely go either way.

The other half of this double main event is a 90-minute struggle for the world title between Backlund and Murocco. Phil Zacko figures what they couldn't finish in 60 minutes they can in 90. We find out Nov. 14.

* * *

I will announce the contest winner in next week's column.



Bob Backlund and the Magnificent Murocco will tangle again Nov. 14 with a 90-minute limit.



JAPAN SERIOUS ABOUT WRESTLING

The Japanese have always been known as a discriminating people. They know what they like in the way of entertainment and they support it vociferously.

One thing which is extremely popular in Japan is professional wrestling and, as in the United States, there are several organizations to handle the professionals. Every pro you've seen or will see at the Spectrum Saturday night has either been to Japan or will be in the future.

Let's have a look at the Japanese organizations.

THE PACIFIC WRESTLING FEDERATION: This group is headed by Lord James Blears and holds membership in the National Alliance and the American Wrestling Association.

Champions recognized by this organization include the Pacific Wrestling Federation Heavyweight Championship, which is held by Shohei "Giant" Baba; the United National Heavyweight Championship, which Jumbo Tsuruta holds; the International Tag Team Championship, which Giant Baba and Jumbo Tsuruta hold; and the Asia Tag Team Championship, which was recently won by David and Kevin von Erich, who defeated the Great Kojika and Motoishi Okuma.

NATIONAL WRESTLING FEDERATION: The NWF promotion in Japan is headed by Hisashi Shinma, who is also the president of the entire World Wrestling Federation. The NWF holds membership in both the WWF and in the National Wrestling Alliance.

Champions recognized by the NWF include Antonio Inoki, who holds both the NWF Heavyweight Championship and the World Martial Arts Championship; Tiger Jeet Singh, who holds the North American Heavyweight Championship, the Asia Heavyweight Championship, and the Asia Tag Team Championship with Umanosuke Ueda (better

known in the U.S. as Mr. Ito); El Canek, who holds the UWA Heavyweight Championship, which is also a recognized title of the Flores promotion in Mexico; and Seiji Sakaguchi and Riki Choshu, who hold the NWF Tag Team Championship.

INTERNATIONAL WRESTLING ENTERPRISE: The IWE is the smallest of the three major professional wrestling promotions in Japan.

It holds membership in the American Wrestling Association. On a recent IWE card in Tokyo, Rusher Kimura successfully defended his IWA Heavyweight Championship against the challenge of Steve Olsonoski.

That same night, Ashura Hara and The Mighty Inoue captured the IWA Tag Team Championship from the team of Paul Ellering and Terry Lathan.

Bottom right: Atlanta, Ga. 9/27/81
Below, right: Philly, Pa. 10/21/81



MR. FUGI, MR. SAIETO SALT AWAY TAG TEAM CHAMPIONSHIP

As Capt. Lou Albano predicted, his dynamic team of Mr. Fugi and Mr. Saitō are now the WWF tag team champions. I was in attendance when this insidious pair literally stole the title from Rick Martel and Tony Garea with a dirty trick.

Garea and Martel had the upper hand throughout most of the match, and, just when Martel was about to put the finishing touches on Mr. Saito, Mr. Fugi unloaded at least half a pound of salt in his face, temporarily blinding Martel and causing the team to lose the title.

The salt throwing was not seen by referee Dick Woehrle, but was evident to everyone else in attendance. Garea and Martel are protesting to the state athletic commission, but rarely does it reverse a referee's decision. I'm sure when the fans see this match on TV they'll agree that the title was definitely stolen.

Spectrum results

Let's take a look at what happened last Saturday at the Spectrum.



MUROCCO
... battled Backlund

●Mr. USA, Tony Atlas, was just too much for George "The Animal" Steele and their match didn't last very long.

●Newcomer Curt Henning looked very impressive in scoring a hard-fought victory over ring veteran Baron Scicluna.

●Special Delivery Jones defeated the much larger Ron Shaw.

●Mr. Fugi and Mr. Saito had a rougher time than they anticipated with Johnny Rodz and Jose Estrada, but eventually defended their belts.

●Garea and Martel were a sight to behold as they easily handled the team of Bulldog Brower and Larry Sharp.

●Former World Champion Pedro Morales outlasted King Kong Mosca.

Andre favors bad foot

●The Andre the Giant vs. Killer Kahn match was probably the biggest crowd pleaser of the night as Andre tried to make Kahn a permanent part of the Spectrum. Andre, however, didn't win this match because both men were counted out on the arena floor, where most of the action took place. From my vantage point, Andre seemed to be favoring the broken foot he sustained in a previous match.

●The main event was a fan's dream as Bob Backlund and the Magnificent Murocco provided one solid hour of excitement, the match ending when the one-hour time limit expired. During the 60 minutes both men had several opportunities to end it but just couldn't put it all together. Backlund takes great pride in his conditioning, but Murocco was in equal shape, or better, at the end.

Promoter Phil Zacko wasted no time in signing a return match between these two for Nov. 14 at the Spectrum. It will be billed as a title match with a 90-minute time limit, so get there early and bring your lunch.

I'll have the complete Nov. 14 card for you next week.

SAMMARTINO: 5,742 BOUTS

Bruno Sammartino had an incredible 5,742 bouts during his career, and in our contest to guess the amount, two people were unbelievably close. Tory Gargano, who finished second, guessed 7,551 while winner Mark Coyle guessed 7,537.

Mark also sent me the following letter:

Dear Gorilla:

I was very shocked when I saw my name in the paper. I am going to guess 7,537. If I do win, I would like to split the tickets with Tory, because he came as close as I did, and if I lose I would like to congratulate Tory for a job well done. May the best man win.

If everyone had Mark's attitude we'd be living in a better world today. Mark, you will be receiving two reserved ringside seats for every wrestling card held at the Spectrum in 1982.

Last Saturday at the Spectrum Bob Backlund successfully defended his title against the Magnificent Murocco, and Andre, the Giant was just too much for Killer Kahn as, at the 11-minute mark, Kahn was hauled from the ring on a special stretcher like yesterday's garbage.

Spectrum promoter Phil Zacko has put together a very special Christmas card of wrestling to be held Dec. 12. This week I'll list the four main feature bouts, then next week I'll fill in the rest of the card.

A first for the Spectrum will

PHILADELPHIA JOURNAL/Wednesday, November 16, 1981



IN THIS CORNER

be a handicap tag team match pitting two men against three. The three-man team will include Mr. Fugi, Mr. Saieto and the infamous Capt. Lou Albano. The two-man team will consist of Mr. USA Tony Atlas and Andre the Giant. Mr. USA has a score to settle with Mr. Fugi and Mr. Saieto, so this should be something to watch.

The Magnificent Murocco

will defend his Intercontinental title against everyone's favorite, Pedro Morales.

A special grudge match has been signed for winner-take-all as King Kong Mosca faces Pat Patterson.

The main event Dec. 12 will be a title bout between Bob Backlund and Greg Valentine, the master of the figure-four leg lock.

Monsoon's column is from Philadelphia, Pennsylvania (as if you didn't know!)



BRUNO SAMMARTINO

WHAT A CARD!

While in the Caribbean recently, I witnessed one of the greatest cards of wrestling anywhere.

The Hiram Bithorn Stadium in San Juan, Puerto Rico, hosted some great bouts.

Jack Veneno defeated Relampago Hernandez in 9:15 with a reverse pin to regain the Dominican Republic heavyweight crown.

One match was for the North American Tag Team Championship with the current champions, the Medics, meeting brothers Pierre and Rick Martel. The Medics, with the help of their manager, gained the victory when one of the masked men sprayed a foreign substance into Pierre's eyes, temporarily blinding him.

The NWA World's Heavyweight Title was also up for

grabs. Harley Race put his title on the line against the No. 1 contender, Puerto Rican champion Carlos Colon, who was declared the winner by disqualification at 18:20.

German killer

There was a lumberjack battle between the Invader and the feared German, Killer Karl Krupp. After 20 minutes of action, both wrestlers were covered with blood. Finally, the other wrestlers who were patrolling outside the ring jumped in to separate them, causing a joint disqualification.

The NWA junior heavyweight title was on the line. Champion Les Thornton defended his

belt against Dick Steinborn in a classic which ended with both counted out of the ring after 14:28.

A tag team test between Dory and Terry Funk, and the sensational team of Mil Mascaras/Jerry Brisco ended with all four men slugging it out at center ring at 22:18 for a disqualification.

* * *

As I promised last week, here's the complete wrestling card headed for the Spectrum Saturday, Dec. 12.

Johnny Rodz meets Ron Shaw; Jose Estrada faces S.D. Jones; Bulldog Brower tackles Curt Hennig; Paulsboro, N.J.'s

GORILLA MONSOON



IN THIS CORNER

Larry Sharp tangles with Rick Martel; Killer Kahn faces Tony Garea; and the big Handicap Tag Team Match — Mr. Fugi, Mr. Saito and Lou Albano against "Mr. U.S.A." Tony Atlas and Andre the Giant.

The Intercontinental title is

on the line as Magnificent Mu-
rocco faces Pedro Morales.

There's a special grudge match between King Kong Mosca and Pat Patterson, and the main event for the world title has Bob Backlund meeting Greg "The Hammer" Valentine.

PHILADELPHIA JOURNAL/Wednesday, November 25, 1981

BACKLUND HAD HIS HANDS FULL

First of all I want to wish everyone a most joyous holiday season. This will be my final column of 1981 as I will be out of the country for awhile.

As predicted, Bob Backlund had his hands full with Greg Valentine in Saturday night's main event, and after 19 minutes and 48 seconds, Backlund, bleeding profusely, was counted out of the ring and Valentine declared the winner.

Of course Bob still has his title, because it cannot be lost on a countout or disqualification.

Spectrum promoter Phil Zacko wasted no time in signing a return match between these two for the first card of 1982, Saturday, Jan. 16.

In addition to the return title match, two other titles will be on the line on the Jan. 16 card as Pedro Morales defends against Killer Kahn and the World Tag Team champs, Mr. Fugi and Mr. Saito, take on the former champs Rick Martel and Tony Garea. Because of the magnitude of this tag match, Mr. USA Tony-Atlas has been assigned as a special referee.

Two new superstars, Adrian Adonis and Jesse "The Bod" Ventura will be making their debut in January. Adonis will face Dominic DeNucci and Jesse will test Special Delivery Jones. Another outstanding star, Steve Travis, will return to the Delaware Valley next month to face the German Giant Hans Schroeder. Three other outstanding preliminary bouts will round out the 21-man star-studded card.

GORILLA MONSOON



Taking a look at other Saturday night action at the Spectrum, Johnny Rodz took a hard fought victory from Ron Shaw; S.D. Jones beat Jose Estrada; Bulldog Brower topped Curt Henning; Rick Martel was too much for Pretty Boy Sharp; and Tony Garea was beaten by Killer Kahn.

As predicted, Mr. USA Tony Atlas and Andre the Giant were just too powerful for Capt. Lou Albano and his tag

team champs Mr. Fugi and Mr. Saito. Pedro Morales successfully defended his Intercontinental title against former champ Magnificent Murocco and Pat Patterson got revenge and satisfaction as he gave King Kong Mosca a real wrestling lesson.

• • •
Gorilla Monsoon's column will resume on Jan. 6.

PHILADELPHIA JOURNAL/Wednesday, December 16, 1981

In This Corner

Gorilla Monsoon



Superstar Billy Graham won bout with big C

First of all, no further news yet on the Oct. 20th Spectrum card, other than the two bouts which have already been announced - Ivan Putski vs. Swede Hanson and Jerry Valiant vs. Yours Truly, Gorilla Monsoon. More on that shortly.

Bruno profile

This week we'll begin the personality spotlight on one of wrestling's superstars, Bruno Sammartino.

Bruno was born in Pezzoferate, Italy, Oct. 6 1937. He spent most of his childhood hiding with the rest of his family in the war-torn mountains of his country.

His was one of the fortunate families that survived, mainly because of the tremendous effort put forth by his mother, who after dark would sneak back into the village to gather food for the family. Even after being shot several times, it still did not deter her from providing for her family.

Sammartino made it to the U.S. in 1953 and settled in Pittsburgh. After graduating from high school in 1955, Bruno spent two years in the U.S. Air Force. He spent most of his teenage years competing in Power and Olympic Weightlifting, setting many impressive records. One was to be the first man to ever bench-press 560 pounds.

Bruno started his professional wrestling career in 1960. He first won the world title in Madison Square Garden on May 17, 1963 from Buddy Rogers. Sammartino held the title until 1971, regained it again in 1973 and held it until 1977. As world champion, Bruno has had the most impressive record in the history of pro wrestling.

A devoted family man, Bruno lives with his wife Carol in a lovely home in Pittsburgh's North Hills. They have three sons; David, 18, and a set of twins, Darryl and Danny, 11. Among many of his hobbies, Bruno is considered an authority in opera and has interest in all pro and amateur sports. His favorite baseball player is pitcher Nolan Ryan of the California Angels. Bruno is still active in the wrestling scene and does color commentary on Championship Wrestling.

No man will ever accomplish what Bruno Sammartino did in

the world of pro wrestling.

Now let's get into the mailbag.

Rogers comeback?

Dear Gorilla,

Now that Buddy Rogers is back in wrestling, do you think there might be a Bruno Sammartino - Buddy Rogers rematch somewhere in the future? Do you think either man would be interested? If the match was signed, would it take place in the federation or N.W.A.? I hope the bout does get the okay. It would take Bruno LESS than 48 seconds to do away with Buddy today.

P.S. I enjoyed watching you on Allentown's card. Congratulations on your victory.

Your Number One fan,
Bob Langnas
Philadelphia

Dear Bob,

Thanks for the congrats. I seriously don't believe a match of that nature will ever take place. Rogers would be unable to obtain a licence in this part of the country, because he would first have to pass the physical. Rogers was suspended here for having a heart murmur. Also, many states have age limitations (45) on licensing people, and at 47, Rogers might be over that limit as well. I'm not taking anything away from Rogers, but his best days are behind him. Even if everything was cleared for the match, it might not take Bruno 48 seconds.

Where's Superstar?

Mr. Monsoon:

Congratulations on your outstanding column on professional wrestling. My question is, when will Superstar Billy Graham return to the WWF arena?

In my opinion, he is the

Garea says Zbysko's 'gone off deep end'

This week's feature is an exclusive interview with top wrestler Tony Garea.

Q. Where have you been over the past two years?

A. I was at home for about six months in New Zealand, then I did a six month tour of the Orient which was extremely beneficial to me, not so much for the money I made, but because I went undefeated and the Oriental promoters are most anxious to have me back. I also spent some time in Southern California and also in the Southeastern United States. However, I am thrilled to be back in the World Wrestling Federation, which I consider my home away from home.

Q. What objectives did you have in mind upon returning to the WWF?

A. I wanted, No. 1, to see if the rumors going around the world about my former partner Larry Zbysko were true. And, of course, be able once again to wrestle in the greatest area in professional wrestling today.

Q. What was your personal relationship with Larry Zbysko when you left the WWF?

A. We were on extremely good terms and he was even with me in Japan for that six-week tour.

Zbysko unhappy

Q. While in Japan did you notice any change in Larry's behavior or attitude?

A. Larry mentioned to me several times that he was unhappy about not receiving the credibility he deserved by wrestling promoters and he felt this was true because he was in the shadow of Bruno Sammartino.

Q. Knowing what has transpired over the past several weeks what are your feelings today towards Zbysko?

A. I feel that Larry has gone off the deep end and is on an inflated ego trip and I can't wait to get my hands on him.

Q. If Zbysko were to sign a contract to meet you in the ring, what would be your plan of attack?

A. I would choose to wrestle Larry on a scientific level because I would like to beat him at

In this corner

GORILLA MONSOON



what he does best, however I don't feel Zbysko would wrestle me that way because he hates to lose and he will do whatever's necessary to obtain a victory, regardless of the opponent.

Now to the mailbag:

Top wrestlers

Dear Gorilla:

Who are the three top heavyweight champions of wrestling today?

Why doesn't Mr. Wrestling II show his face when he is wrestling somebody?

Denise Davido
Philadelphia

In my opinion the top three heavyweight champions today are Bob Backlund, Harley Race and Nick Bockwinkel.

Mr. Wrestling II, as with many other pro wrestlers wearing a mask, does so obviously to hide his identity. He may have at one time

he adds to his versatility by disguising himself and in turn enables himself to make a better living.

True World champion

Dear Gorilla:

Do our local champions (Backlund, Fuginami, Patera etc.) need Phil Zacko's permission to defend their titles in other areas?

"Bob Langnas
Philadelphia

The champions that you have described in our area certainly do defend their titles pretty much throughout the entire world, however they do not fall under the jurisdiction of Spectrum promoter Phil Zacko. Their bookings are arranged by the World Wrestling Federation president Mr. Shima who has his base of operation in Tokyo.



BOB BACKLUND
... beat in the business

wrestled in another area of the country using a different name and without a mask, so

Samoans tag team champs

Well, Capt. Lou Albano said it would happen, and Saturday at the Spectrum about 20,000 fans got to see it. The Wild Samoans grabbed the World Wrestling Federation tag-team title from the grasp of Ivan Putski and Tito Santana.

Putski and Santana started like a house afire and it looked like curtains for the Samoans until Sica, Samoan No. 1, using the head butt, opened a gash on Putski's head that started to bleed profusely. Ivan, preoccupied with the wound and the bleeding, was not able to come to the aid of his partner and Santana was pinned after taking a vicious Samoan drop.

Fans also got to see Bob Backlund lose his bout to Hulk Hogan, but not lose his belt after being thrown out of the ring. A title can only change hands on a submission or pinfall. Bruno Sammartino annihilated former friend and student Larry Zbysko. Ken Patera made an extremely strong showing in getting a hard won victory over ring veteran Rene Goulet and Tor Kamato made a very impressive debut stopping the dangerous Johnny Rodz.

Now to the mailbag.

Dear Gorilla:

How come everybody is against Larry Zbysko? He only did what he thought was right. As many people didn't see, Bruno humiliated Larry on TV and also used Larry. I think Bruno got what he deserved.

*Kevin Jackson
Newark, Del.*

Everyone is entitled to his

own opinion, however, if you think that was justice — the vicious attack way that Larry attacked Bruno Sammartino, the pounding with a wooden chair that resulted in some 24 stitches, leaving a permanent scar on the man's face — then I think it's time for you to sit back and readjust your values.

Dear Gorilla:

I read your column every week and I've been watching wrestling from the time TV came out. I would like to see professional wrestling be cleaned up. Whoever makes

In this corner

GORILLA MONSOON



up the matches needs to be replaced because he is doing a very bad job. Fans don't want to see a 330-pound man wrestling a 210-pound man.

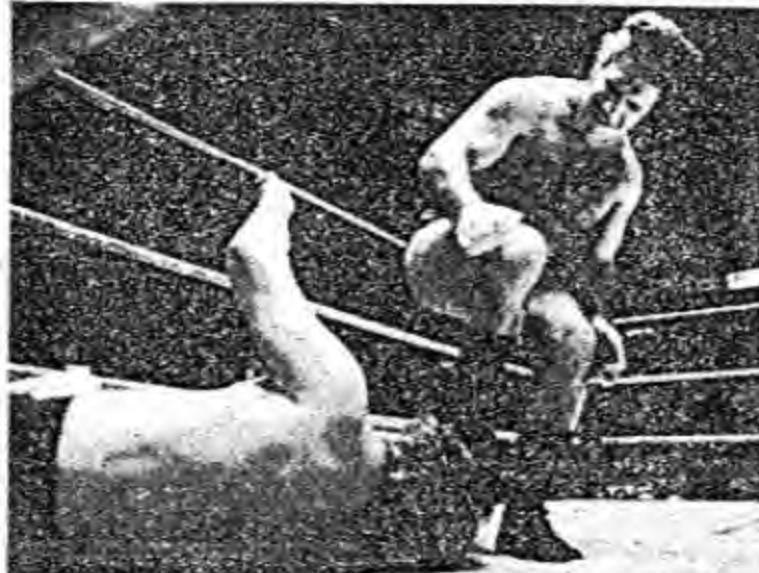
Plus, there should be some way for fans to get the results of matches for past weeks.

Finally, what right does Hulk Hogan have for a chance at Bob Backlund's title. You said in the paper that the reason that Ivan Putski never got a chance at the WWF title was because he did not wrestle overseas. You said this was a must for a chance at the title. Well I like to know who Hulk Hogan wrestled overseas and when. You and I both know that Hogan don't have any right for a chance at the title.

*Bob Franks
Norwood, Pa.*

Most results from the super cards of wrestling can always be found in the Journal. The matchmaker for this particular area is Phil Zacko who obviously is doing an outstanding job as the Spectrum has been completely sold out for just about every bout for the past year, however I certainly do respect your opinion and will relay your message to the powers-that-be. I hope this gives you some kind of satisfaction because I don't feel that the promoters are going to change their format at this point. It's hard to argue with success.

Hulk Hogan not only wrestled in the Orient, but also wrestled in Germany and South America before coming to the WWF.



Journal photo by Mike Levin

Bruno Sammartino puts his foot down during Saturday's match with Larry Zbysko.

In this corner

GORILLA MONSOON



Pedro Morales' career carved on an island

This week's personality profile is on one of the all-time great champions of pro wrestling, Pedro Morales. Pedro was born on a small island off the coast of Puerto Rico called Culebra. When he wasn't going to school he spent most of his time swimming and fishing off his native island.

Pedro became interested in wrestling at age 16 when the legendary Argentine Rocca made an appearance in San Juan and Pedro had the opportunity to see him. Upon graduation from high school Pedro went to New York, trying to get a break in wrestling. At first no one wanted to try the unproven Morales but veteran promoter Vince McMahon Sr. saw championship material hidden deep within the young Morales. After many tough years and some severe hardships Morales' dream came true in Madison Square Garden in the winter of 1971 when he defeated Ivan Koff for the world's title. Incidentally, yours truly was Morales' manager at that time and I stayed with him until he lost the title three years later right here in Philadelphia to Stan the Man Stank.

Morales keeps himself in unbelievable physical condition. His vigorous training schedule leaves only one to two hours daily for recreation or outside activity.

Pedro is now back in the World Wrestling Federation and will meet Samoan No. 1 here in the Spectrum, July 26.

Before we go into the mailbag, I want to remind all of our Philly fans who are shore-bound that championship wrestling will be at the beautiful Convention Hall in Wildwood every Monday throughout the summer.

Now to the mailbag:

Zacko has good thing

Dear Mr. Monsoon:

Now that the Arena at 46th and Market Sts. has been sold and reopened how are chances for bringing back the TV taping? Most people work and find it difficult to attend the shows in Allentown.

Betty Ambler
Philadelphia

Dear Betty:

When the Philadelphia Arena shut down several years ago, the promoter there, Phil Zacko, moved his operation to Allentown for the purpose of televising. He is currently enjoying a very successful run in Agricultural Hall at the Allentown Fairgrounds. I cannot see at this time Mr. Zacko making a change back to Philadelphia unless that particular facility in Allentown becomes unavailable.

Little Beaver active

Dear Gorilla:

Who is the most popular midget wrestler participating in this sport? Are there any tales for the small wrestlers?

Billy Garter
Philadelphia

Dear Billy:

Over the years probably the most exciting and popular midget wrestler would have to be a tossup between two individuals, one being Little Beaver and the other being Sky LowLow. Both of these men are active as is another man who is extremely popular — Lord Littlebrook. To the best of my knowledge there is no title involved in any of the midget matches. Why I don't know, except maybe that there are only 10 or 11 midget or dwarf wrestlers left in the world, in addition to some midget girl wrestlers.

What about McGraw

Mr. Gorilla:

For the last few weeks I have been watching a new wrestler by the name of Rick McGraw. Is he a new wrestler? Has Rick wrestled in other states? How many years has he wrestled?

Ruth Sutcliffe
Philadelphia

Dear Ruth:

Rick McGraw is relatively new to our business, having been wrestling professionally for the past two or three years primarily in the southern states, where he's built quite a reputation for himself. Hoping to enter into better and stiffer competition he contacted the promoters here on the East Coast to get himself booked. Upon reviewing his credentials they were most happy to welcome Rick McGraw to the World Wrestling Federation.

In this corner

GORILLA MONSOON



I have a great many things to tell you this week. First is a great new contest for all professional wrestling fans in the Delaware Valley.

The photo in the bottom left corner of today's column is of an outstanding wrestler of yesterday. The letter with the correct name and earliest postmark will be the grand prize winner. The winner's name will appear in the column. The winner, plus nine of his friends, will be my guests at the Nov. 8 Spectrum card. They will have exclusive use of the Spec-



Mystery guest

If you're the first person to send Gorilla this man's correct identity, you and nine friends will enjoy the Nov. 8 Spectrum wrestling card from the Superstar Suite, compliments of Gorilla.

trum's Superstar Suite, where a hostess will serve them food and drinks at yours truly's expense. Make sure your return address is legible.

Nov. 8 card

As I promised last week, here is the complete card for the Spectrum on Nov. 8. John Rodz vs. Manual Soto; Jose Estrada vs. Rick McGraw; Larry Sharp vs. Rene Goulet; The Samoans vs. Tony Garea and Rick Martel; The Hangman vs. Pedro Morales; Sgt. Slaughter vs. Angel Marvila; Ken Patera vs. Bruno Sammartino; and a special return match between Larry Zybszko and Bob Backlund with Mr. USA, Tony Atlas, as guest referee.

If that's not a super card, I don't know what is. I want to tell you that effective immediately, all mail for my column must be sent to the following address: Wrestling Associates, P.O. Box 877, Willingboro, N.J. 08046. Do not send your letters to the Journal anymore.

Here's some other exciting news. On Sat., Nov. 1, I will make an appearance at Championship Wrestling Day at Deptford Mall, as part of the grand opening of the New Spectrum Show Case Pro-Sports Team Store. A wrestling ring will be set up in the mall and I will be giving an explanation from 1 p.m. till 4 p.m. Here's your chance to get into the ring and see what it's really like. Bring your cameras.

Now to the mailbag.

Outdoor wrestling

Dear Gorilla:

Has there ever been a pro wrestling card held at an outside sports facility? If so, who were the participants? Do you think it would be possible to conduct wrestling bouts at Vet Stadium? Where was the largest crowd to watch pro wrestling?

Bob Lentz

Dear Bob:

There have been many outdoor cards of wrestling. I will name a few for you. The Orange Bowl, Chicago's Comiskey Park, San Juan's Roberto Clemente Stadium and the most successful, Shea Stadium last Aug. 9. The main event was a steel cage match between Zybszko and Sammartino. I think Vet Stadium would be an ideal spot for outdoor wrestling.

Backlund's opponents

Dear Gorilla:

Do you think Bob Backlund will face Giant Baba and do you think Larry Zybszko will face Tony Garea?

Tyrone Sapp

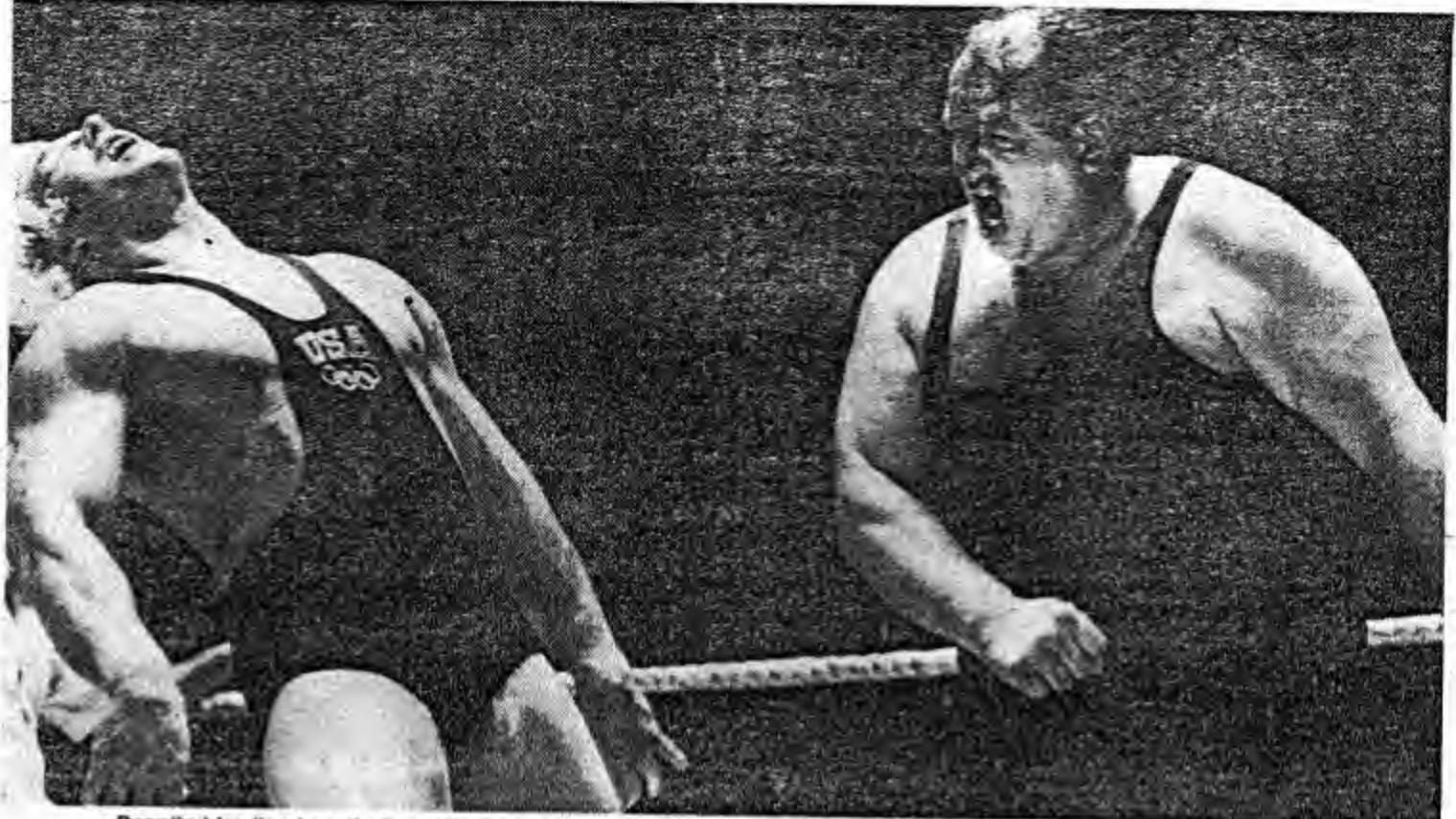
Dear Tyrone:

Your questions tell me you have a keen mind for wrestling. Backlund in the very near future will be making a tour of the Orient and I'm sure Giant Baba will be one of his opponents. The feud currently going on

between Zybszko and Garea can only end up one place — inside the squared circle.



BOB BACKLUND
... going to Orient



Despite bleeding heavily from the forehead, Gorilla Monsoon sends Ken Patera reeling during Saturday night's match at the Spectrum. Monsoon lost but declined to reveal if he would quit professional wrestling after 21 years in the sport. Before the match Monsoon had stated he would quit if he lost.

GORILLA battered

After 16 minutes of the most brutal hand-to-hand, foot-to-head combat the Spectrum has ever witnessed, Olympic Strongman Ken Patera put Gorilla Monsoon's lights out with a shot to the head Saturday night.

Patera got a pinfall at 11:54, but ...

"Patera used a foreign object, probably brass knuckles," Journal columnist Monsoon said yesterday, after watching slow motion instant replays several times. Patera also opened a several stitch gash in Monsoon's head when he slammed him into the steel ring post.

Monsoon declined to say what the loss held for his future. After stating in his weekly column that he would quit if beaten, Gorilla asked that his decision be held until this Wednesday's column.

"I really don't want to discuss it right now," said Monsoon, a veteran of 21 years in the squared circle.

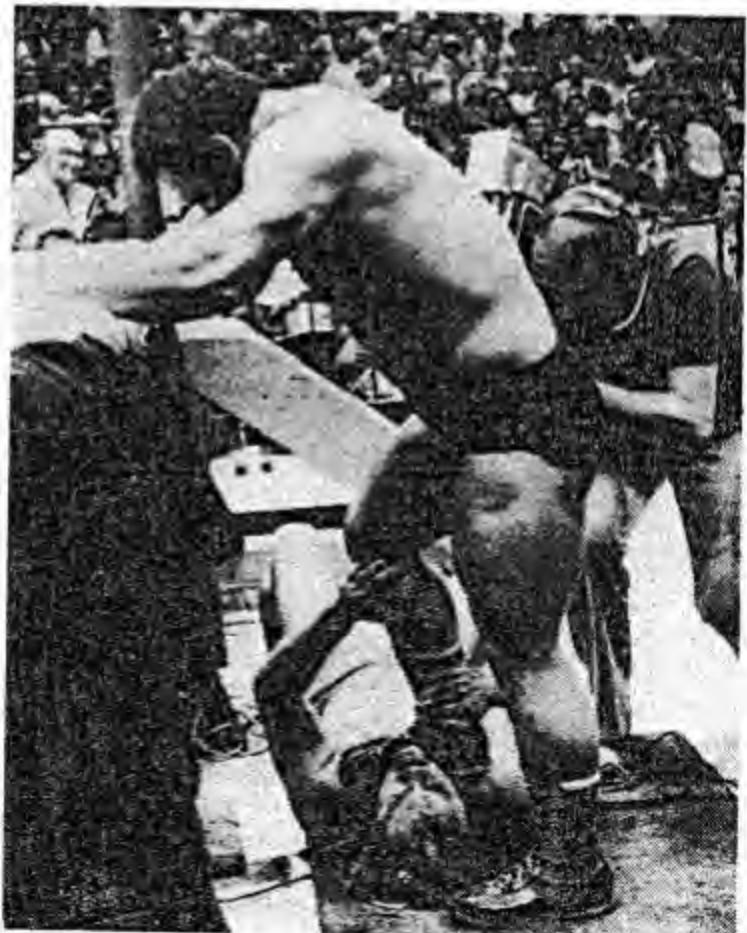
"I'll reveal everything in my column Wednesday."

Zbysko wins

In other bouts, Ivan Putski took command and gave rulebreaker Larry Zbysko a thorough beating. Unfortunately for the Polish Power, Zbysko, of Pittsburgh, used a last minute maneuver using the ring ropes for leverage to get a pin at 10:48 on Putski.

In what had been billed as a tag team title match, but was later changed to simply a tag team match, Pedro Morales and Andre the Giant stomped Samoan No. 1 and Capt. Lou Albano into submission. Morales and Andre toyed with their opponents for about nine minutes until Andre came forth with a Giant Splash to destroy the Samoan at 9:22.

In early bouts, Rick McGraw defeated Jose Estrada with a pin at 13:19 and Baron Scicluna stopped Johnny Rodz at 8:46.



Journal photos by Mike Levin
As a cameraman maneuvers for a better angle, Ivan Putski slams his right shoe on the throat of Larry Zbysko outside of the Spectrum ring.

Gorilla Monsoon: No 'fix' in wrestling

By M. G. Kram
News American Staff

On the other end of the phone was Robert Marella, a self-employed independent contractor.

"It is a stigma that has long been associated with our trade," he said from Atlantic City, N.J. "a stigma we have been trying to get rid of for the last 20 years. I can assure you, the outcome of a bout is never prearranged. There is just too much money involved; the winner gets a 70 percent cut."

"That is the name of the game...the money. We are all self-employed, independent contractors. Some of these guys out there are playing with half a deck — some of them will do anything for that 70 percent cut."

Thus, Robert Marella turned into Gorilla Monsoon...for the money.

He has gone from a black-hearted villain to a white-hatted hero since he started out as a professional wrestler 16 years ago — and while he has not retired from the ring altogether, he has at least slowed up. To keep the peace at the Bob Backlund — Greg Valentine World Wrestling Federation Championship match Saturday night at the Civic Center, the State Athletic Commission asked the 6'6", 400 lbs. Gorilla to referee the bout. It seems that the last time these two squared off, a referee of much smaller dimension was knocked cold. It can get nasty in there.

Orso says Gorilla Monsoon,

If anyone needs proof of just how nasty it can get, he invites all skeptics to look at his medical bills.

"When I was going 100 percent," says Monsoon, 42. "I was spending \$5,000 to \$8,000 on doctors. This is not a bed of roses. Its as rough as it looks. It's worse. I played three sports in high school; and the worst injury I ever got was a broken toe. Since I've been wrestling as a pro, I have had all my ribs broken twice, both shoulders dislocated, my left ankle fractured and numerous contusions and concussions. I have been knifed, black-jacked, and burned on all parts of my body with cigarette butts, not to mention having my car dismantled. Its a lot of fun."

It was, of course, no fun for the bearded, abused villain, his role when he started out under the management of Wild Red Berry. Once a great champion himself, Wild Red knew all the ins and outs. He packaged the Gorilla Monsoon as the "wild beast from Manchuria." Wild Red told television audiences that his primordial pet spoke no English.

Gorilla grunted at his side.

Except for his size, there was nothing bestial about him. He had been an exceptional student, graduating 5th in his class at Ithica College, while wrestling and playing football and track. He was teaching high school English — after passing



up he some pro football offers — and was training for the 1960 Olympic wrestling competition.

Then he received a telephone call: a chance to wrestle in Canada for \$400 a week.

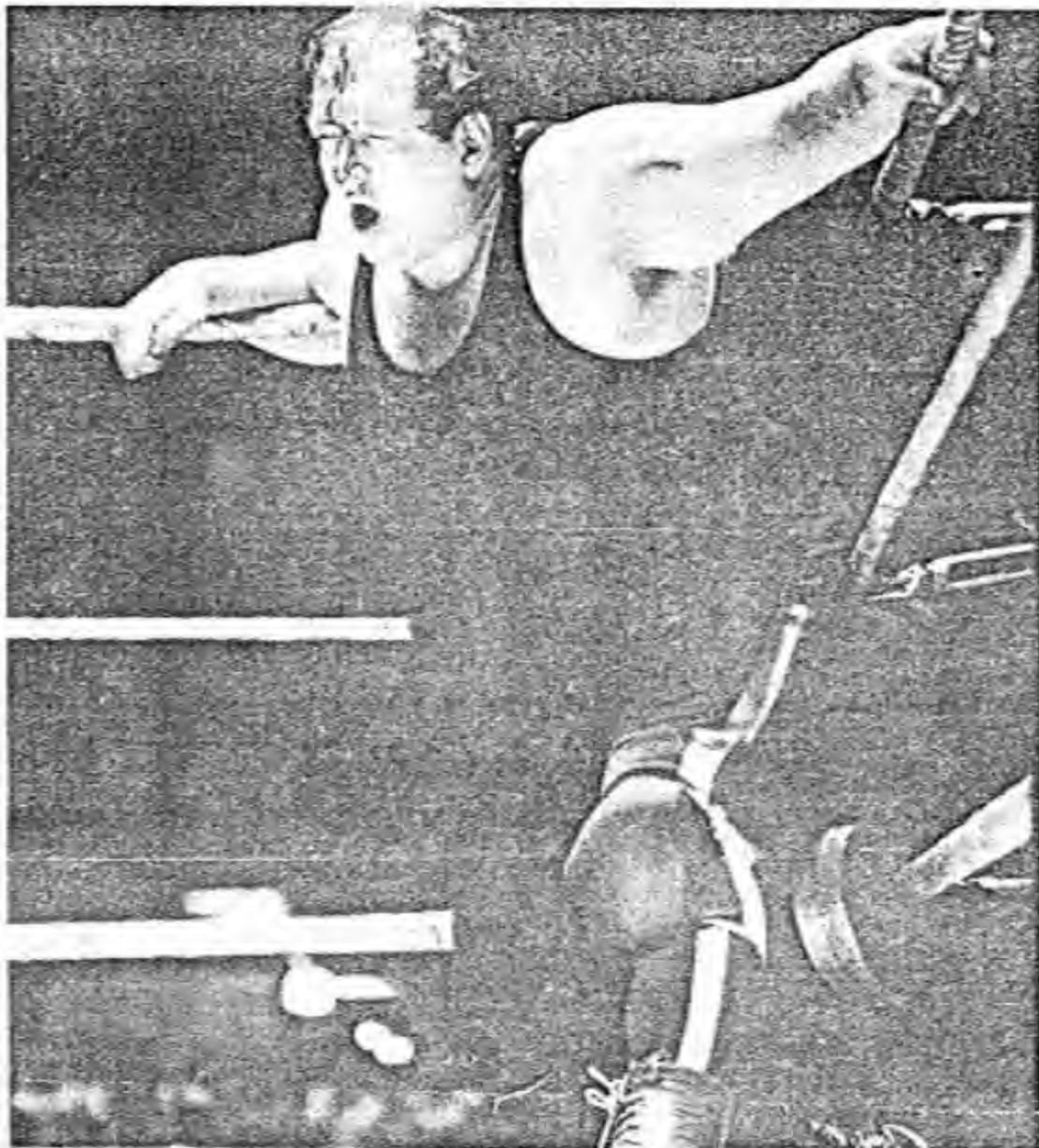
"Say a circus came to town," he says, "and it could somehow be predicted that the highwire artist was going to fall that night, there wouldn't be an empty seat in the house. People enjoy hockey much more when they drop their gloves and start to brawl. People like the contact sports, the action. They like seeing big bodies fly through the air. Its been prov-

en: people are sadistic at heart.

"When I was going 100 per cent," he says, "I was going six, seven, sometimes 10 times a week. That has changed over the past couple of years. I go about once a month or so. Its tougher coming back from all those injuries. Ten years ago you'd get an injury and you could bounce right back. Now it would keep you out of action for three or four months. Wrestlers are the best conditioned athletes in the world; you get accustomed to our bodies taking physical punishment. It takes more out of you as you get older."

"But I'm not ready to burn my tights and shoes. Not just yet."

Gorilla Hangs Up Tights



Gorilla Monsoon, who took a beating in his last Spectrum match, retires from the wrestling ring in a special ceremony on Saturday, Oct. 11 at 8:30 p.m.

Gorilla Monsoon, the mammoth wrestler from Willingboro, N.J., will hang up his tights and retire after 21 years and 8,000 matches.

The 6-6, 387-lbs. veteran of the ring will be honored by the Spectrum, Philadelphia area wrestling fans and radio station WIP during the Saturday, Oct. 11 World Wrestling Federation matches at the Spectrum at 8:30 p.m.

Monsoon, whose real name is Robert James Marella, turned professional in the fall of

1959 after winning silver medals in the collegiate nationals in the free style and Greco Roman.

Monsoon's retirement will be commemorated by the Spectrum when the first 10,000 wrestling fans to enter the Spectrum on Oct. 11 will be given an autographed Gorilla Monsoon photograph.

In addition to receiving a trophy from WIP personality Tom Moran in the ring between matches, Monsoon will be given a special tribute from the State of New Jersey.

A graduate of Ithaca

College, Monsoon has held numerous amateur and professional wrestling titles including All-Asiatic Heavyweight Champion, four-times co-holder of the World Tag Team Championship, North American Heavyweight Champion, United States Heavyweight Champion and winner of 1975 Japan International Tournament.

Tickets for the Monsoon Farewell and wrestling program are \$3.50, \$6.50 and \$7.50. They are on sale at the Spectrum box office and all Ticketron locations.

WRESTLING FANS THANK GORILLA



Journal photo by Mike Levin

Journal columnist Gorilla Monsoon thanks his fans after receiving trophy of appreciation from WIP's Tom Moran at the Spectrum Saturday night.

He wasn't bare-chested. He didn't wear those black tights or the shin-high boots. There was no opponent facing Gorilla Monsoon between the ropes this time.

He entered the Spectrum ring between Saturday evening's second and third matches with his hair restyled into a perm, wearing a black suit, dark sunglasses and a big grin.

Radio station WIP, the Spectrum, his native state of New Jersey and area wrestling fans paid tribute to Monsoon, who retired in August after a glorious 21-year career of over 8,000 matches.

Monsoon, who writes a weekly column in the Journal, stood near a corner of the ring, his hands folded in front of him, while WIP's Tom Moran presented a commemorative trophy thanking one of the greats in professional wrestling history. Barbara Kalik, the New Jersey assemblywoman for Burlington County and a neighbor and close friend of Gorilla's, proclaimed him the "true macho man" and awarded him a citation and a peck on the cheek for his contribu-

tions to orphans and underprivileged children.

Choked up

When the microphone was ultimately passed to the mammoth Robert James Marella, the Willingboro, N.J. resident choked up in gratitude as he prepared to address the crowd one last time.

"I'm at a loss for words," he humbly said. "Whatever success I've had in my career I owe to you fans."

All fans present were given a chance to dine with him in the first-prize drawing for the "A Night with the Gorilla" contest held that evening.

The first 10,000 of the 12,183 extending kudos each received an 8 x 10 glossy of the former U.S. heavyweight champ and current Capitol Wrestling TV broadcaster.

Gorilla Monsoon left the all-too-familiar ring one final time and still came out a winner — but never again a wrestler.

— Randy Alexander

INTERVIEW/By MARALYN LOIS POLAK

'My Mother Did Not Name Me Gorilla'

"I could easily kill my wife and get away with it. No court in the world would convict me. In my sleep I could accidentally strike her and kill her, or roll over and smother her. No, we don't have separate bedrooms. Fortunately, my wife's a light sleeper," superheavyweight wrestler Gorilla Monsoon roars.

There is only a skinny, executive-style desk separating me from Gorilla Monsoon, and that is not enough. He is 6-foot-6, 387, I am 5-foot-4, 118, and the Spectrum is not big enough for both of us. I can imagine him snapping the desk in half as if it were merely a matchstick. What evil lurks behind those sinister dark glasses, that scarred and furrowed forehead? Isn't he the behemoth who boasted, "We're all sadists"? Didn't he tangle with a 900-pound bear named Terrible Ted? Conquer an opponent in a record 31 seconds? Vanquish Muhammad Ali with an airplane spin? Hasn't he devoured 10 pounds of steak, two loaves of bread, three quarts of milk in a single meal? Why, his own personal grocery bill is at least \$200 a week. Didn't he once dispatch a bus-stop masher into an 18-hour coma? He reaches into the pocket of his plaid cowboy shirt of tentlike proportions. My pen falters, my voice quivers. He pulls out... a pack of Kools. Relax.

Gorilla Monsoon started wrestling at the Rochester Y when he was 8. When you consider his earliest memory, his career choice is not surprising. "I remember I was about 4, trying to drive a nail into my brother's head with a hammer, playing some kind of game. It didn't work out too well," he grins. Strangely enough, he was very small until he was 11. "Then I had an over-secretion of the pituitary gland and I grew 13 inches in one year and a foot the next. Then I quit, thank God it



Photograph by Richard M. Triley

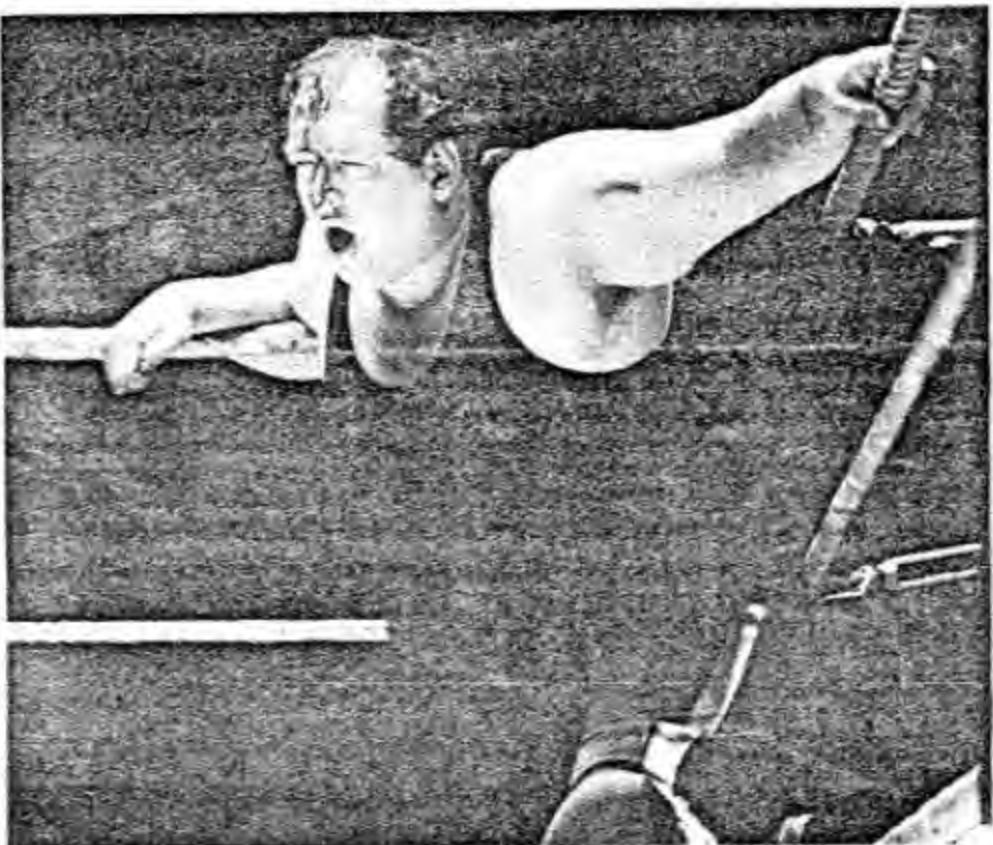
"But I was in a lot of pain. It was like being on a rack and getting stretched. My bones were growing too fast for the ligaments and muscles," he claims. "I was in a great deal of pain, my father was in a great deal of pain, he'd buy me something and three weeks later it didn't fit. Lucky I did stop growing. I was 260 in high school, I was 310 in college, and now I'm 387."

Young Gorilla wanted to be a soldier. "Unfortunately I didn't make it," he says with genuine regret. "I had gotten one of the highest ratings on the written test in 10 years. I was fresh out of college, they were very impressed. A couple of fellows had great plans for me. But a sergeant took one look at me and said, 'This is going to cost the government a fortune to put you in uniform, so forget it.' I was too big, they wouldn't take me."

"Let's face it, if you are my size (52 waist, 61 chest, 22 neck, 21 arms, 30 thighs, 25 calves), you have to be careful whatever you do," he asserts. "I go into a lot of good restaurants, the maître d' will say, 'Can I get you a table?' and I'll say, 'No, I just want to look at your chairs.' I have walked out of a lot of restaurants because their chairs are not suitable for me."

"It's tough. Just about everything I wear is made for me. I walk into these big men's shops, regardless of what they advertise, all I can buy in there is a tie and handkerchief," he shrugs. "My wife complains my wardrobe is too big. She says she doesn't have enough closet space. I probably have 25 suits, maybe 500 shirts. I wear a lot of shirts. I like silk shirts. Depending on the weather, I go through three or four shirts a day. I perspire a lot. I drink a lot of water, but it's healthy, it's healthy to sweat."

Goodbye, Gorilla....



Gorilla Monsoon before ...



... and after retirement.

New Jersey Assemblywoman Barbara Faith Kalik presents Willingboro, N.J. resident Gorilla Monsoon with a Proclamation on behalf of the State Assembly upon the occasion of his retirement at the Spectrum in October.



AP PHOTO

Gorilla Tactics

Professional wrestler Gorilla Monsoon — all 6-foot-6, and 387 pounds of him — demonstrates his strength with

the help (?) of publicist Kathy Duva. The Gorilla Twirl is one of his favorite ring maneuvers.